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ABSTRACT

This report consists of papers given at, relating to, and produced by an international seminar that emphasized sharing practical experience and analyzing conditions necessary to set up and sustain a literacy program. The first section provides an "Introduction" (James Porter) and "Background to the Seminar" (Alan Rogers). Opening session papers include "The Meaning of Illiteracy: Moving from Rhetoric to Reality" (Manzoor Ahmed) and "Women, Literacy, and Development" (Lalage Bown). Information on organization of the workshops is followed by the "Seminar Programme Introductory Talk to Workshop Leaders" (Brian Street). The following papers and reports are provided for four workshops: "Literacy in Zambia: Human and Economic Crisis" (David Alexander); "The Relationship of Nonformal Education and Development" (David Stephens); "Which Literacies?" (Brian Street); "Definitions and Politics" (Didacus Jules); "Reflections on the Botswana National Literacy Programme" (E. K. Townsend Coles); "Case Studies from India" (Moitraye Mukhapadyaya); "Ideology and Curriculum" (Juliet McCaffrey); and "Appropriate Materials and Method in Literacy Teaching" (L. S. Saraswathi). A report to the plenary session is provided for each workshop. An "Afterword" (L. S. Saraswathi), "Comments on Workshops" (Brian Street, Alan Rogers), and a list of speakers and workshop leaders conclude the report. (YLB)

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LITERACY IN DEVELOPMENT

PEOPLE LANGUAGE POWER

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"... It is more important to teach people better agriculture and village hygiene than to take time teaching them to read. When they are better fed and in better health, the literacy campaigns can be started..."

"... To become literate is to become liberated from the constraints of dependency... Empowerment from literacy is the foundation of all other benefits and advancement of people and their societies..."

Report of a seminar for all those interested in development, education and literacy in the Third World

COMMONWEALTH INSTITUTE 6-7 APRIL 1990

This event was arranged by **Education for Development** and the **Commonwealth Institute** as a contribution to **UN International Literacy Year 1990.**

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LITERACY IN DEVELOPMENT
PEOPLE, LANGUAGE AND POWER

Papers given at, relating to and produced by
the international seminar held at the
Commonwealth Institute, London
6-7 April 1990
for International Literacy Year 1990

Edited by
BRIAN STREET

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1990

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Introduction

INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth Institute was delighted to be the host for the "Literacy in Development" Seminar, which marked the major contribution in the UK to the International Literacy Year. Sub-titled "People, Language and Power", the Seminar underlined the deep significance of language as a link between people and the effective exercise of power in the world.The emphasis was upon the sharing of practical experience and the analysis of the conditions necessary to set up and sustain a literacy programme.

The Seminar was organised by Education for Development supported by many bodies including the Commonwealth Foundation, the Overseas Development Administration, The British Council and the British Association for Literacy in Development. Distinguished speakers and workshop leaders worked over the two days with an extraordinary range of participants, approximately half of whom came from developing countries.

Those of us involved were particularly pleased that an Institute devoted to the Commonwealth provided the venue for the Seminar, as the great majority of the countries of the Commonwealth perceive literacy as of the highest importance. This is illustrated by the fact that the Commonwealth Ministers of Education Conference in Barbados in October 1990 is also devoted to the theme of basic education. It is comparatively rare, however, for a seminar to produce such a detailed record of interaction between participants, frankly facing the difficulties and tensions which arise from the different cultural assumptions, ideologies and methodologies which surround the field of literacy.

This report is commended to those readers who share, with most of the participants in this Seminar, the view that "to become literate is to become liberated".

James Porter
Director General
Commonwealth Institute

BACKGROUND TO THE SEMINAR

Alan Rogers, Education for Development, Seminar Organizer

The immediate background to the two-day international seminar on Literacy in Development was International Literacy Year 1990

It was clear that ILY would generate many activities in all countries, including the countries of the West. Most of these activities would be aimed at improving the standards of literacy in those countries. It was also clear that this is what was happening in the UK - various initiatives were being launched directed at helping those with reading and writing difficulties to improve their skills and their confidence.

However, it seemed to Education for Development that the activities for ILY 1990 in the UK, if the year were to be really international, should include an attempt to direct the attention of the general public to matters relating to literacy in Third World developing countries - to increase their awareness and understanding. The problem was how to do this appropriately. It seemed wrong in principle for Westerners simply to talk about literacy in Third World countries, to give lectures, showing slides etc; so we planned to enable those in the Third World to talk directly to the West. This suggested a video as the medium.

A project was therefore designed with the co-operation of the Commonwealth Institute - to make a video of rural literacy. A word of explanation is needed here. Since we believe that urban and rural literacy education call for very different approaches, we felt we had to decide between the two; we couldn't contain both within the one programme. We chose rural because most of the population in Third World countries live in rural areas. But we would urge that more attention is paid to the special features of teaching literacy in urban areas in the developing countries.

We decided to make the video in one country. To bring together different cultural systems would only confuse, and the logistics of filming in various places would make the project too complicated. We chose Bangladesh because it seemed to highlight many of the issues; but we could have chosen any country - the video is not about Bangladesh but about literacy in rural development.

The project proposal received immediate support from various bodies, notably CAFOD, the Commonwealth Foundation and Christian Aid. We were in business.We therefore planned a special showing of the video at the Commonwealth Institute for early April, and the active support of other bodies including BALID was also sought and in many cases obtained.

It was at this point that things took off in a different direction. Dr. Brian Street agreed to work with us on a seminar, and the Commonwealth Institute urged that we should make the showing into a more substantial occasion. In the event, this turned out to be a good thing, for the final version of the video was not ready for that day. But the seminar began to take on a life of its own - especially in its objectives.

What emerged from the many discussions which we had during the preparation of the project was that many aid agencies were not at all sure that literacy had any role to play in development. Those of us

who had been involved in developmental programmes over the last twenty years had witnessed a remarkable series of changes. In the 1960's, literacy was seen as an essential component of development; literacy was needed for economic "take-off" (a magical figure of 40% was posited) and no civilised country could call itself developed if it had significant numbers of illiterate adults. Gandhi's moral imperative held sway. But from the early 1970's, this attitude changed. Participation, co-operation, self-help groups, savings and credit groups could all be run with only a handful of literate persons; indeed, some held that to impose literacy on the poor people was cultural invasion. What was more, experimental programmes in health and agriculture suggested that literacy was not only not necessary for development, but that teaching literacy at the same time as training in health and agriculture could be a positive hindrance to the programmes.

The late 1980's has seen something of a swing back among some aid agencies (UNICEF in particular; UNICEF UK and UNICEF Bangladesh were most supportive of this project). Education for All was devised to match Health for All. But other agencies like OXFAM were not yet sure - indeed, some agencies could not decide whether to recognise ILY 1990 at all (it must be recorded here that OXFAM did support this project, and that it is the special approach which OXFAM adopts which accounted for their hesitation about pronouncing on the role of literacy in development).

The issue then that seemed to need airing was, what role did literacy really have to play in rural development? This was the theme we took for the two-day seminar.

The co-operation and support we received were truly amazing. The Commonwealth Institute staff worked intensively to make the event a success. They provided the space and back-up support for a month-long exhibition on literacy in the developing Commonwealth (the first literacy exhibition they had ever had). Reading University Agricultural Extension and Rural Development Department decided to publish some background papers for the seminar in a special edition of the RRD *Bulletin* which was rushed out just in time for the seminar. At the suggestion of the Commonwealth Institute, the event fell into two parts - a public meeting at which the issues were aired to all who wished to come (we hoped to have the media here but with one small exception the media were not apparently interested), and a smaller residential seminar in workshops which would enable the participants from West and Third World to enter into dialogue. UNICEF agreed to facilitate Manzoor Ahmed to come to give the keynote address; the Council for Education in the Commonwealth provided a speaker (Lady Helen Pickthorn); BALID provided support for the residential facilities and helped with the planning; the ODA agreed to report on the international conference at Jomtien, Thailand; the British Council and ODA agreed to finance a number of Third World participants to the two-day event; John Ryan of UNESCO agreed to take the chair for the opening event and to stay to the end, giving his comments on the outcomes. And so we could go on.

The event itself went without a hitch. About 250 persons attended the opening

session; 118 persons attended the two-day seminar, 40% from the Third World and 60% from the UK. The commitment was apparent in that most of the participants stayed to the very end - late on Saturday afternoon.

How far the main issues were addressed, others must judge. From what I saw and from the papers in this report, I get the feeling that the basic dilemma - whether literacy has any role at all in rural development - was not addressed in any meaningful way. The reason seems to be that virtually all those who attended were already convinced of the necessity of literacy education for adults and were committed to making it more effective; their problem was one of strategies, not principles. But I may be wrong and that more discussion of this central issue went on, especially in the informal meetings on the Friday evening and at meal and coffee breaks.

I must conclude by thanking everybody who took part - the participants, the workshop leaders, the speakers, the writers of reports, the helpers - I cannot begin to mention everybody. The team worked together very well, and I, Education for Development and the Commonwealth Institute are all most grateful.

II

OPENING SESSION

LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT: MOVING FROM RHETORIC TO REALITY

Manzoor Ahmed UNICEF Representative, Beijing, China

The Meaning of Illiteracy

What is the meaning of illiteracy? From an individual point of view, an illiterate person finds himself or herself placed among the most disadvantaged in society - disadvantaged economically, politically and culturally. The person so placed - deprived of access to much of society'sstore of knowledge,information, skills and understanding - is unable to help himself or his family and children pull out of the disadvantage they are in. Illiteracy of parents leads to their children's non-attendance in or early drop out from primary school - thus perpetuating the chain of illiteracy. The connection between mother's literacy and the mortality rate and nutrition of children as well as the small family-sized has been well established. Not being able to contribute to or participate in community life effectively, the illiterate has a diminished sense of self-esteem.

A romanticized view of the traditional wisdom of the illiterate is sometimes presented. The wise illiterate, it is said, inherits the accumulated stock of knowledge of past generations and learns from the school of life. The fallacy in this argument is that while traditional societies were organised to preserve and transmit folk wisdom without extensive use of written words, modern societies do not have the same arrangements and cannot function without the artifact of written communication. There is no substitute for extensive use of written words in a complex modern society with an infinite demand for the transmission of knowledge and information which keep multiplying at an eve r -faster rate. A person deprived of the means to communicate with written words to-day is as handicapped as one is by physical or mental disability.

For society and the nation, illiteracy is the disadvantage of the individual multiplied a million times. A large number of people deprived of the opportunity to stand on their own feet, to look after their own needs and well - being effectively and to contribute to the progress of the nation as a whole is the price of a large segment of the population being without the means of communication and learning.

Distribution of illiteracy in a society typically follows certain patterns. There is a high concentration of illiteracy among the ethnic and cultural minorities - those belonging to tribes, castes, races, religions and languages different from the mainstream of society; among people living in the relatively remote and inaccessible parts of the country - in the mountains and deserts; and among the poor - often those who do not have enough income to keep their body and soul together or, in the economic jargon, those below the poverty line. And, of course, women - the age-old victims of discrimination - form the majority of illiterates. Sixty per cent of the world's illiterates are women. In short, illiteracy ensures that the people not in the mainstream of society continue to remain on the margin and the ones disadvantaged or victims of discrimination remain deprived of the tools to overcome their condition.

Illiteracy and Structural Problems of Society

The degree of illiteracy and its persistence are measures of the depth of the structural problems of a society - that is, the uneven way the political and economic power is distributed, the political and economic policies and priorities are determined and the systems and institutions for carrying out these policies are organised. The extent of illiteracy is a reflection of a nation's collective failure to attach high priority to the values of the just society. There is no other way of explaining the phenomenon of a significant proportion of the citizenry remaining deprived of the means of surviving and functioning in society with human dignity. Hence, there are 30 million adults functionally illiterate in North America despite the fact that the two countries in that continent are amongst the richest in the world(1). In fact, enough examples exist to show that progress in literacy is not strictly a matter of the economic status of a country. Some of the poorest countries or regions within countries have in recent history made very substantial progress in a short period of time in both adult literacy and primary education. The commonly cited examples are Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, the Kerala State of India and China. Many other countries at substantially higher levels of national income lag far behind these countries in literacy rate.

In South Asia, for example, barring Sri Lanka and some parts of India, progress has been very slow in reducing illiteracy in the last 20 years. The total number of illiterates, in fact, has grown during this period with the number of female illiterates increasing at a faster rate. The alibi cannot be just the economic situation. The South-Asian countries have not suffered the same type of economic decline as sub-Saharan Africa or the severe recession in Latin America aggravated by the crushing external debt burden. The trend in South Asia has been of a moderate steady growth of the economy. Each of the countries in fact did initiate mass literacy programmes in recent years, but none produced significant results. A major weakness in varying degree in these programmes was the perception of the mass literacy programme as a campaign for transmitting the mechanical skills of identifying and copying the alphabet. The campaign failed to place literacy in the context of the structure of social inequities and to view it as a tool for a larger process of communication and learning with the aim of overcoming the handicaps the disadvantaged segments of society suffer. Thus the necessary organizational structures for mobilizing the enthusiasm and energy of the intended beneficiaries were not developed; the literacy programme was not made an integral part of a broader awareness-raising and learning effort by enlarging post-literacy learning possibilities; and the determination to invest the required financial resources was lacking. Another serious constraint is the limited capacity of the regimes in power to command the confidence and the support of the masses and motivate them to respond to a call for nationwide mobilization.

There is also a question of the concept of development and how central is the

place of human resources in national development goals and priorities. Since Adam Smith, the significance of human capital in economic development has been recognised and the contribution of human resources to it has been re©discovered by economists in the 1960's. But only recently the enhancement of human capacities and the realization of human potential have begun to be viewed as the means, the end and the measure of national development. What could be a more fundamental step in enhancing human capacities than offering the basic tools of communication and learning to those without it ? The policy and action implications of this new human resource view of national development, however, are yet to be digested and applied in any significant way in most developing countries.

Not Just Decoding the Alphabet.

Given all the ramifications and implications of the literacy effort of a country, it is evident that there is much more to the commitment to a literacy goal and the plan to carry out a literacy programme than offering 80 to 100 hours of lessons for teaching the alphabet and the rudiments of reading and writing - which is what a typical literacy programme attempts to do.If we contemplate the deep symbolism and true meaning of literacy, we would be reluctant to use the common description of the goal of a literacy programme, viz, eradication of illiteracy. This term reinforces the misconception that illiteracy is a disease that can be cured by applying a dose of the right medication and perhaps can be wiped out like smallpox by giving everyone a vaccination. If one were to use the health analogy, one should think of literacy as a process of ensuring adequate nutrition and continuing to provide the necessary nourishment so that one can survive, and grow and develop. Illiteracy is an individual and collective social condition that has to be changed through reordering society's priorities and values and through persistent application of these redefined priorities and values in social action and in theuse of society's resources.

Intractable Numbers.

The complexity and the far-reaching implications of a serious commitment to literacy require that we move from facile rhetoric to realities of specific strategies and actions. Even if there are ample goodwill and good intentions, the sheer numbers that have to be dealt with remain daunting.

In the South Asian region, for example, the total adult illiterates in India is in the order of 260 million. Bangladesh and Pakistan add another 80 million. The total number of participants in all adult education programmes in India in the mid-1980's was about 3 million. The number of participants, I believe, were proportionately less in the other two countries. With net enrollment rate in primary education between 50 to 80 per cent of the primary age-group and completion of primary school of those entering class one only 20 to 40 per cent, the addition every year to the pool of illiterates is huge. Good and up-to-date statistics are not available of precise rate of enrollment of the primary age-group and their completion, taking into account the over-age and under-age enrollment and the numbers dropping out and repeating years in the same class. This

itself is a measure of the insufficient seriousness of purpose and inefficiency of programmes. Given the large numbers of children not enrolling in primary education and others dropping out before they acquire a sustainable level of literacy, a conservative estimate would be that 10 million young people are being added to the current pool of adult illiterates in the South Asian region every year. Current literacy efforts in this region are attempting to fill a water bucket that has a large hole in the bottom and the hole may be growing larger.(2)

India and China - the two countries which constitute 60 per cent of world's illiterates - have decided in their plans for the 1990's to concentrate on the productive and the motivated ag -group, 15 to 35 years in India and 15 to 40 years in China. India's Literacy Mission launched in 1988 ambitiously envisaged reaching 30 million people by 1990 and another 50 million by 1995 out of a total number of 110 million without literacy in the 15-35 age group. The programme strategy is not very explicit about those who will reach adulthood during this period without the benefit of primary education.

China estimates a target of 72 million illiterate people in the 15-40 year age range. China's current goal is to reach at least half of this population with literacy programmes in the next 10 years and stem the tide of another 3 million young people without effective primary education joining every year the ranks of the illiterates. It will take a major improvement in the reach, efficiency and effectiveness of primary education as well as at least a doubling of efforts in adult literacy to achieve China's relatively pragmatic goal. China and India illustrate the enormity of the task as well as the challenge faced by many developing countries who are less well-prepared than these two countries to launch large-scale programmes.

Two points clearly emerge:first, no serious and permanent dent on illiteracy can be made without success in bringing children into the primary education system and keeping them long enough in the system and teaching them enough so that they attain a self-sustaining level of literacy. Secondly, the political and social constraints in most of the countries, particularly in South Asia, sub-Saharan Africa and even in China, with a large pool of illiterates that continue to be replenished, make the goal of universal or near-universal literacy in the next one or even two decades quite an unrealistic proposition.

World Conference Goals.

The World Conference on Education For All held in March this year in Jomtien, Thailand, sponsored by UNESCO, UNDP, UNICEF and the World Bank and in which most countries of the world and external assistance agencies and many non-governmental and professional organizations joined, has in my opinion, struck the right balance in respect of the goals and strategies for the 1990's in literacy and primary education.(3)

Two major goals for the 1990's that the Framework for Action adopted by the Conference urges countries to set for themselves are as follows:

- *Universal access to, and completion of, primary education (or whatever higher l evel of education is considered "basic") by the year 2000;*

and

- *Reduction of the adult illiteracy rate (the appropriate age group to be determined in each country) to, say, one-half its1990 level by the year 2000, with sufficient emphasis on female illiteracy to significantly reduce the current disparity between male and female illiteracy rates.*

It is noteworthy that the suggested goal for primary education - universal access and completion - is far more ambitious than the goal for literacy which is an unquantified reduction of adult illiteracy of an appropriate age-group. The emphasis is not only on access and enrollment but completion of a full cycle of primary education. The focus on actual learning is further underscored in another suggested goal for "improvement in learning such that an agreed percentage of an appropriate age cohort (e.g. 80% of 14 year-olds) attains or surpasses a defined level of necessary learning achievement."

The "Framework" also urges expansion of early childhood care and developmental activities including family and community interventions especially for poor, disadvantaged and disabled children - which is often a pre-requisite for the participation of children of the marginal population groups in primary education.

A relevant recommendation from the adult literacy point of view is one that asks for the use of all channels of communication including mass media and traditional means of communication to expand access for individuals and families to "knowledge, skills and values required for better living and sound and sustainable development."

I refer to the World Conference at some length because I believe it represents a renewed world-wide interest and an international initiative to promote basic education.

Practical Steps.

In recapitulating the practical aspects of mounting and sustaining a successful programme of literacy promotion, I would like to underscore the following:(4)

1) Massive illiteracy is always accompanied by the absence of primary education opportunities for large proportions of children. Any time-bound plan for reducing adult illiteracy in a significant way has to begin by an effective plan for expanding the reach of primary education.The aim has to be more than just enrollment, but effective learning so that a self sustaining level of learning skills are acquired and thus the floodgates of illiteracy can be eventually shut.

2) While the widest possible opportunities should be offered and no interested learner should be excluded from the literacy programme, a realistic strategy calls for time-phasing and setting priorities for concentration. Reaching young adults who are more likely to be motivated and are likely to put immediately to use their new skills and knowledge would be a logical priority in countries with large-scale illiteracy. Special attention to women, because they have been traditionally subjected to discrimination and because of the potential direct impact

of their literacy on children and the family, would be appropriate in most situations.

3) Literacy programmes, complemented by expanded and effective primary education, must also be reinforced and supplemented by a network of opportunities for divers and continuing post-literacy learning. All channels of communication and education have to be harnessed to create a 'learning society' in which the 'literate' culture, behaviour and values can be nurtured.Literacyand numeracy, for individuals and groups, will be put to use, the skills will be further developed and developmental consequences of literacy will be realized only if the power of the communications technology is fully and systematically utilised to disseminate widely useful knowledge and information which can make a difference in people's life.

4) A participatory approach has to be developed and the organizations and methods have to be created to allow and encourage people in all walks of life as individuals and through social, cultural, religious, labour, and professional organizations to contribute to a mass education movement. Voluntary organizations and community groups which originate from the need to address collectively critical livelihood or other urgently felt problems can often be the best vehicle for literacy and continuing learning. The Government's main task would be to create the environment and condition for people to plan and participate in the nationwide effort rather than the government itself managing and controlling it.

5) Special attention is needed to overcoming the religious social, cultural and economic barriers to the access and participation of women to literacy in many parts of the world. Again it is the mobilization of public opinion which will be the most potent weapon. But measures have to be taken at the same time to solve specific problems which may be economic or logistical such as women, overburdened with their daily back-breaking chores, not having the time or energy to participate in learning.

6) More public resources, both as the proportion of the national income and of the government budget, have to be put into basic education - particularly primary education and literacy and post-literacy learning opportunities. South-Asian countries and China, on average, now spend in education only half of the average GNP percentage spent by industrialised countries. Yet several of these Asian countries have managed to give another raise to the budget for the armed forces. All avenues of mobilising non-budgetary and non-government esources also have to be exploited in line with the mass mobilization approach.

7) There has to be a more rigorous approach to setting meaningful criteria of literacy than the casual methods prevailing in many countries. Systems of monitoring and

assessment of both individual literacy achievement and progress of a country have to be developed and applied systematically if literacy efforts are to be carried out with seriousness of purpose.

8) The technical aspects of the literacy programme often is ignored because a general notion prevails that the pedagogy of the primary school can be directly applied in adult literacy courses. Teaching and learning methods, training of instructors, the language question, assessment of progress, content of learning, and the production and distribution of learning materials all need professional attention, especially if many local organizations are expected to be active in the effort. A network of resource centres to provide technical support to local organizations has been found tobe a useful approach. Most important of all, the basic education effort including primary education, literacy and post-literacy learning has to be made the core of a national human resource strategy. Basic education has to be placed within the framework of a new order of priorities in which the enhancement of human capacities is on the top of the list.

International Support.

I want to return briefly to the question of resources and the need for external assistance. I have made the point that the success of literacy and basic learning opportunities will hinge on national priorities and mobilization of the country's own resources. External assistance, however, will be a decisive influence in the least developed countries, particularly in Sub-Saharan Africa, which have seen a progressive decline in their economies for almost two decades. A new element in recent years has been the crushing burden of external debt for some of these countries resulting in the sad irony of a net transfer of resources from the poorest countries of the world to some of the richest countries. There has been a decline or stagnation in enrollment in primary education and reduction of education budgets' share in public expenditure in at least half of the 42 least developed countries during the 1980's. External assistance for education also has declined from about 17 per cent of all official external assistance to 10 per centbetween1980and1987.(5)

According to a recent exercise, to ensure effective primary education for all children in 72 low and lower-middle income countries, the educational investments have to be roughly doubled in the next decade by adding to the current budgets an amount in the order of US$50 billion. Most of the additional resources will have to be generated in the countries themselves. However, for the 39 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa and Namibia) - assuming that economic decline in these countries will be arrested, their debt burden will not grow, and proportions of national budgets and GNP for education will show moderate growth, some reforms in education will be instituted for efficient use of resources and the current level of external support will continue - there will be still a gap of 7 to 10 billion dollars which has to be met from external assistance. This level of assistance will represent one-half to two-thirds increase over the present external assistance to

Sub-Saharan Africa. A substantial part of this increase can be met easily with a debt-relief policy linked to national basic education allocations.(6)

In the South Asia region, India has made greater progress towardsuniversalization of primary education and expansion of literacy than the other large-population countries of Bangladesh and Pakistan. The two latter countries with larger proportions of out-of-school children and adult illiteracy, and limited realistic prospects of significant sectorial reallocation, face a substantial resource gap. Additional external support of about two billion dollars is estimated to be required between 1990 and 2000 for these two countries in order to ensure primary education opportunities for all children.

It is clear that the balance in external assistance has to be corrected and the needs of the least developed countries has to be given special consideration. The conclusion of the above- mentioned exercise is that with all the efforts that can be made to re-allocate among sectors, such as transferring funds from defence to education, and to introduce reforms in education to put more funds into basic education and to use these funds more efficiently, there will be still a gap of one to one-and-a-half billion dollars each year which have to be found from external sources. In order to attain the basic education goals, most of this additional assistance has to go to Sub-Saharan Africa and other selected least developed countries, to basic education rather than other levels of education, and to support at least for some time recurrent costs rather than capital construction and imported equipment.

The Wind of Change.

A wind of change today blows over most of the world. The words democracy, human dignity and freedom of the individual citizen resonate with a new meaning that is immediate and real to people all over the world. We dare hope today that we are on the threshold of a new era in which human ingenuity and nations' resources spent so long in preparation for war and destruction will be devoted to raising the level of human welfare. One manifestation of this hope is that plans are underway for holding an unprecedented summit meeting of world leaders in September this year to be devoted entirely to the needs and well-being of children.The possibility exists now to let all human beings enjoy the access to the growing store of life-enhancing knowledge and the right to share with others knowledge and ideas which can enrich us all. How can a large segment of humanity still be denied this basic human right as we prepare to step into a new era of human progress and a new century ?

I conclude with this rhetorical question in order to make the point that rhetoric need not be abandoned; it is just that rhetoric has to reflect reality and lead to action.

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WOMEN, LITERACY AND DEVELOPMENT

Professor Lalage Bown, Director of Adult and Continuing Education, University of Glasgow.

Introduction

In the world at large, who are the illiterate people? However else we answer this question, we know that the majority of illiterate adults are women. On UNESCO figures, as Manzoor Ahmed reminds us, at least 600,000 of the projected one thousand million illiterates at the end of the decade will be women and there is quite good evidence that 720,000 (or almost three-quarters of the total) will be women. These are people to whom their societies have given prime responsibility for nurturing children in their early years, who often live in polygamous households (which may diminish their share in family decision making) and who make such unpaid contributions to the domestic economy as fetching water and fuel-wood from long distances. In addition, they do much of the agricultural labour, mostly on subsistence farms, but also on very low pay in cash-crop plantations.

In all the regions of the South, a larger proportion of women than men have no formal education at all, the least gap being in Latin America with the Caribbean, and the biggest gap being in the Middle East and North Africa. This suggests that cultural assumptions about women's role and capacities may influence their educational chances, but there are other obstacles such as the pressures on time and energy already mentioned.

Because of all this, we ought to focus attention on women as we study the issues of literacy in development. Otherwise, it is probable that literacy campaigns will largely benefit men, and where women are involved, that men will continue to play the main part in deciding an appropriate curriculum for them.

The Problem of Statistical Invisibility.

It has taken a long time for many of us interested in literacy and development to realise the dimensions and implications of female illiteracy - the reason being that as the Brandt Report stated in 1980:-

> "No political system today automatically assures the equal status of women, and production - orientated societies generally tend to undervalue their contribution. Statistical methods still largely ignore the contribution of women when it takes place within the household rather than in the labour market, and they also tend to ignore the economic contributions of women because their employment is often concentrated, in the so - called 'informal sector' or is seasonal and thus difficult to measure. statistics also underestimate the number of households in which the woman is the *de facto* economic head, because they use biased definitions -
>
> *Thus women remain statistically invisible"*

From our point of view, one consequence of that statistical invisibility was that literacy and education figures were often not disaggregated to show men and women separately.

There have been some changes since the Brandt Commission wrote. The International Women's Decade resulted in

a greater knowledge of the value of women's work in development and also in a heightened consciousness of the moral justice of greater equality for women and a greater share for them in developing decisions. Useful research has also been done, to indicate women's role in development and to begin to suggest some of the contributions which literate women can make.

The Potential Impact of Female Literacy.

If more women were literate, what difference would it make? Research so far done gives ideas on the potential impact of female literacy in the major areas of child and family health and well-being, and economic change.

It is almost certain from research (quite often fostered by UN agencies, especially UNICEF and UNESCO) that where more women are literate, infant mortality would be reduced, child nutrition would improve (but whether this would apply equally to girls and boys is not so sure) and family health would be better. There would also be better spacing of child-births (whereas the education of men seems to make no difference to this); and it is likely that there would be a positive effect on family decisions about sending children to school and on the benefit they would gain from schooling.

I have said it is "almost certain" and "likely", because other factors must be borne in mind. In conditions of extreme poverty or in times of such disasters as civil war and drought, all health and education improvements would be nullified. This is why we cannot discuss the impact of literacy without remembering the countervailing impact of poverty as well.

With a better understanding of women's economic activities in the countries of the South, and given the assumption that educated people are better able to contribute effectively to economic change - as well as to share in controlling it- we can also at least presume that literate women can operate more effectively in their countries' development than their illiterate sisters. Women's capacity to adopt improved methods of food production and food processing would be enhanced and there is evidence that women's capacity for economic organization is improved with literacy. They can form their own credit and savings organizations and band themselves into co-operatives which they control for themselves. Further, if they are in societies which favour individual enterprise, it is quite hard in the late 20th century for an uneducated woman to set up as an independent entrepreneur.

Impediments to Women's Literacy.

If the benefits of female literacy are either known to be likely or at least believed to be possible, why are so many women still illiterate? Because of the long hours of work to which many are committed and because of the amount of energy expended in their various tasks and roles, it is often very difficult indeed for them to participate in literacy programmes or, if they do participate, to deploy the necessary concentration. So non-educational measures may have to be taken to remove the most serious obstacles. A good village water-supply,

taken to remove the most serious obstacles. A good village water-supply, for instance, would undoubtedly free women's time and energy so that literacy classes were more useful to them.

Secondly, as already hinted, most decisions about literacy and about development are still taken by men. In some countries, national women's bureaux and similar agencies have helped to bring women into the policy discussions, but more recognition must be given to the need for women to be consulted on development issues. Educated women can act as advocates and mediators, but only if they are given a political place.

Conclusion: Implications for Aid Policy.

In sum, women's literacy can affect development and ought to give women greater control over their situation; but the benefits of literacy are related to some non-educational provisions and also to the extent to which women are accepted in the political process. Development aid from the North can help more women to become literate and can help to remove the obstacles in their way. Moreover, through scholarship policy, it can give opportunities to educated women to gain skills necessary to develop mechanisms for the less educated to become literate in many ways which are for their own and their country's advantage.How serious are we in talking about these issues? If we know that nearly three-quarters of all illiterates are female and if we are fairly sure that more literate women would bring about desirable social and economic change, we should ask national governments and international aid donors:

Are you giving three-quarters of your literacy aid specifically towards women's literacy? And are you giving a substantial part of your other aid to removing the obstacles to women's participation in literacy and hence in development?

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III

WORKSHOPS

THE ORGANISATION OF THE WORKSHOPS

Brian Street, University of Sussex, Seminar Co-ordinator.

Each workshop consisted of about 25 participants and at least two workshop leaders meeting for 1 1/2 hours; each was conducted four times allowing all 100+ who took part in the seminar to attend all four workshop topics The workshop leaders provided written material to stimulate discussion and this is appended to each section; in addition rapporteurs provided notes on the sessions they attended and lists of the main points discussed were written up on flip charts for the plenary sessions We have reproduced the notes and lists verbatim in order to provide the feeling of the seminar and so as to allow different voices to speak about their impressions of the workshop discussions. The organisers would like to thank all those who took the trouble to keep notes and who let us have their written accounts.We believe they represent the richness and variety of discussion in a different, but no less valid and insightful way, than the conventional "essay" format.They offer insights into the contradictions as well as the agreed patterns and repetitions in ideas about literacy held amongst a representative group such as this.They also provide an interesting balance to the written papers and formal addresses at the seminar, that we also reproduce here: we suggest that readers interrogate the latter by means of the former - the kind of dialogic literacy that the organisers and many at the seminar are proposing for literacy programmes general

LITERACY IN DEVELOPMENT: PEOPLE LANGUAGE POWER

Workshop Timetable

	Room 1	Room 2
Friday 6 April		
2.00-3.30	A: Non-Formal Education and Development M Ahmed/D Alexander	A: Non-Formal Education and Development D Stephens
4.00-5.30	B: Definitions and Politics of Literacy B Street	B: Definitions and Politics of Literacy D Jules
Saturday 7 April		
9.30-11.00	PLENARY SESSION: D Barton	
11.30-1.00	C: Setting up and Sustaining a Programme E K Townsend Coles/ M Mukhapadyaya	C: Setting up and Sustaining a Programme D Williams
1.00-2.00 Lunch		
2.00-3.30	D: Teaching and Learning J McCaffrey/L S Saraswathi	D: Teaching and Learning J Millican
4.00-5.30	PLENARY SESSION: J Ryan	

INTRODUCTORY TALK TO WORKSHOP LEADERS

Brian Street, Seminar Co - ordinator

The aims of the seminar are to raise consciousness and to inform thinking on literacy in the context of development and of the Third World. The question we would like to address during the workshops and plenary sessions is "What is the role of Literacy in development?" We hope to make a contribution to ILY by bringing together literacy practitioners and experts from both the Third World and the UK to share experience, pool resources and exchange viewpoints. The seminar provides participants with an opportunity both to discuss recent developments in literacy theory and to share in some practical work and problem-solving of the kind encountered in literacy programmes.

The means by which these aims will be achieved are a combination of seminar discussion and of stimulation of actual programme work. The sessions will be both substantial and critical: substantial in the sense that they build on the large and varied experience of the participants themselves, together with the expertise of the workshop leaders; and critical in the sense that we want to open up for question assumptions about literacy that frequently get taken for granted-assumptions about, for instance, "empowerment", about the meaning of "functional" literacy and about the nature of gender participation in literacy practices will all be raised and subject to critical scrutiny. The participants come from a range of experiences and backgrounds, some deeply involved in literacy programmes or in writing about literacy for many years, others new to the field or mainly involved in areas such as development and looking to see what literacy has to offer. Of the 100+ participants, 40% come from Africa and Asia, of whom most are in the UK this year for study purposes, 40% are Adult Literacy practitioners in the UK, a number of whom have experience abroad, and the rest comprise academics, agency workers and organizers. The workshop leaders represent a similar range of backgrounds but have all been deeply involved in their area of literacy work for many years: the intention is that they should use their experience and knowledge of the field to help structure the workshops so that, in the short time available, we do not have to "re-invent the wheel": the aim is to provide a structured and substantial experience in which those attending can participate meaningfully. Each workshop has at least one leader from the Third World and one from the UK in order to establish from the outset the interaction and balance that are the focus of the seminar.

The overall organization has therefore been carefully drawn up to gain the maximum benefit from the knowledge and experience of the participants and to provide for some development over the period of the seminar. The opening topic, for instance, is deliberately broad in order to place the ILY theme of Literacy in its wider context. We first intended to use the session to relate literacy to development, but the workshop leaders themselves pointed out that we should broaden it still further to read "The Relationship of Non-formal Education and Development". Issues to be addressed include: putting literacy into the context of other development programmes eg. adult education, health, agricultural extension, co-operatives etc. For example, adult

education programmes sometimes focus not upon literacy as such but upon the development of a curriculum arising out of joint investigation of local conditions by facilitators and learners.

It is only after addressing this general context that we can usefully consider the role of literacy itself. In order to do so we must next clarify what we mean by the term and locate literacy practices in their political context, hence the title of the next session: "Definitions and Politics of Literacy". We ask "What is literacy?" and "what are the different meanings of literacy in different cultural settings?", "who defines the problem and whose problem is it?". We will explore the significance of cultural differences between literacy animators and recipients and consider the role of different languages, creoles and literacies.

The first two sessions are envisaged as setting the practical work of the second day in a more theoretical context: the seminar could have been organised differently, perhaps beginning from people's own practical experience and then broadening out to "theory". But we felt that in the time available, a mere sharing of practical experience could have no boundaries and might run on forever without necessarily helping participants to make sense of their varied experiences. So we decided to provide a fairly tight context in which to explore just what we mean by literacy and how it fits with other aspects of education and political activity: our own theoretical starting point was that one cannot envisage literacy practices outside of some power context, however much educators and policy makers have tended to represent them as merely neutral or technical matters. The sessions on the first day should give ample scope to debate and explore these questions in some detail.

On the second day, then, we move to practical concerns. Again the title of the workshops changed after consultation with the leaders: the session on "Setting up a Literacy Programme" became, significantly, "Setting up and Sustaining a Literacy Programme". The workshop leaders will provide materials and resources that enable participants to engage in problem solving of the kind experienced by practitioners on the ground. Questions to be considered include: the relative merits of mass and of local programmes; the necessary support systems and resources to facilitate success; how to sustain a programme once it has been launched.

Finally, there will be a session explicitly addressed to questions of Teaching and Learning: areas covered will include: appropriate materials and methods in literacy teaching; who controls the curriculum and who should be the instructors; the training of animaters for rural development; the uses of a Freirian approach in different contexts. It is apparent from these questions that practice will be informed by the kinds of ideas and concepts that have been discussed in the previous more theoretical sessions.

In order to pull the individual workshops together, we have scheduled Plenary sessions at which participants can report back to the whole seminar, share

experiences and insights and pool resources. The first plenary will be after workshops A and B to enable their findings to be collated and digested and then move forward into the succeeding sessions and Dr. David Barton of Lancaster University has been asked to make the appropriate preparations and to lead this session. On the second day, Mr. John Ryan of the ILY Secretariat and based at UNESCO in Paris, will offer a commentary on the whole seminar and help to pull together the various threads that have run through. In both plenary sessions there will be ample time for participants to present their views and to hold discussions. Each workshop will be asked to provide a flip chart listing some of their major findings and these will be displayed on the walls and some participants (not the workshop leader) will be appointed in each session to be responsible for this and for presenting the group's findings to the rest of the Seminar.

The plenary sessions and the flip charts will help provide the basis for the conference report, along with the material circulated by the workshop leaders. This report will be made available to all participants and to a wider audience interested is issues of literacy and development. The whole seminar, then, has a precise structure and a definite development, whilst the production of a published report provides a further sense of direction and purpose.

Alan Blackhurst of the International Community Education Association and other participants share experiences over lunch.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

WORKSHOP A:

NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

LITERACY IN ZAMBIA: HUMAN AND ECONOMIC CRISIS.

David J Alexander, University of Edinburgh

The Context.

In order to grasp the difficulties faced by literacy workers in Zambia it is necessary to briefly outline the dimensions of poverty and underdevelopment in which they operate. Zambia at present is experiencing an economic and human crisis of devastating proportions. The economic crisis is not to be seen only in terms of structural problems, chronic shortage of foreign exchange, adverse terms of trade and increasing indebtedness, but in terms of a much deeper human crisis affecting morale, the basic capacity to regenerate the economy, the social fabric and the knowledge and cultural base. There are rapidly growing levels of unemployment and underemployment, absolute and relative poverty and a worsening and skewed income distribution which are having appalling effects on the quality of life, nutrition, health, literacy and education. A major fear of Zambian educators is that even if they can manage to expand the educational system to cope with the increasing child population and obtain basic educational materials, malnutrition will be destructive of learning capacities.

The financial crisis and dependence on aid gives Zambian literacy workers and educators little room for manoeuvre at present. They are seriously concerned that there will be:

a) major set-backs to basic educational services and their quality, for both children and adults, which have been developed since 1964;

b) a serious increase in basic and functional adult illiteracy which in 1980 stood at 41% of whom up to 75% were women in a population of 5.6 millions.

Women may well suffer most and this is at a time when the numbers of female headed households are increasing rapidly to well over 30% in some areas. These women may have a hoe, less than a hectare of land, no credit, no collateral, no draught power, no agricultural extension advice and no labour except her own and what exists in her family of perhaps 5 younger and 3 or 4 older dependents. At least 20,000 small peasant households are headed by single women, due to rural poverty and continuing male migration to the towns. Family breakdown, malnutrition and sickness compounded by real cuts in public expenditure and social services are rife. People are dying invisibly and women usually do not control any small cash income they might derive from farming.

Zambia became independent in October 1964 as a relatively prosperous country in Sub-Saharan Africa, though with inequitable income distribution between rich and poor. The United National Independence Party has retained power since that time and Zambia is now a one-party state. There is a well organised trade union movement. The structure of the economy has changed little since independence, being largely dependent on copper and lacking in diversification. Perhaps most important for the regeneration of the economy has been the neglect of the agricultural sector, despite its vast potential, and of small and peasant farmers which has meant a

failure to achieve sustained self-sufficiency in food production, rural immiseration for the majority and continuing urban migration. Increases in oil prices in 1973 and the fall in copper prices in 1975 have had severe and continuing effects. IMF and World Bank interventions have hit the poorest the hardest, removed food and fertiliser subsidies, caused riots and have not noticeably improved the situation. The Zambian government has adopted a policy of "Growth from our own Resources" outlined most recently in the Fourth National Development Plan 1989-93, but it is doubtful whether these measures will work well enough to relieve Zambia's deep and structural difficulties quickly. It is estimated that 24% of urban and 80% of rural households are below absolute poverty levels and the situation is worsening. A third of under-fives are malnourished and 40% of children die before the age of fifteen. On a conservative estimate there are well over 1 million unemployed youth in the urban areas alone and adult and youth unemployment are increasing. In 1988 only 360,000 workers were in formal employment which is less than 10% of the labour force.

Education and Literacy.

The expansion and achievements of the educational system since 1964 have been enormous. Until independence child, adult and youth education had been neglected. The educational legacy of colonialism was that in 1964 one million adults (two-thirds of the then adult population) were illiterate or sub-literate. The great majority of the rural population has never been to school. Only 15% of the men and 3% of the women had more than 4 years primary education. Only 1,200 African Zambians had obtained secondary school certificates.The total number of African Zambian university graduates was just over 100. Nor, owing to racism practiced by white trade unions and the policy of colonial administration which treated Zambian workers as rural tribesmen and migrant labour, did Zambia possess a stable, skilled industrial workforce based on copper and secondary industry.

By 1975, approximately 86% of primary age 7-14 were in primary education, although there was a push-out of Grade IV of 32% due to lack of places. However, only 23% of primary leavers could find places in secondary school and the progression rate from Form III to IV was 50%.

This must be seen as a major achievement but significant causes for concern were beginning to emerge which have now surfaced with avengeance. Purely incremental expansion has not been financially viable and a chance to make continuing education, including literacy work, a second arm of the system which could have reduced educational and social inequities was missed in 1978. The combination of an imbalanced population increase and financial crisis has had the following major effects.

The population was approximately 5.6 million in 1980 and the rate of increase is now estimated at 3.4%. By 1990 the population may be 7.7 million, and by 2000 over 10 million, and perhaps 11 million. The children of the poorest may well already be being squeezed out of the

educational system at entry or at later stages of primary.

49% of the population are 15 or less
21% of the population are 7-13 years (7 years primary education age range).
25% of the population are 7-15 years (9 years basic education age range).

Nine years Basic Education is the aim of the Educational Reform which the government aimed to implement from 1983. At present there is perhaps up to 85-90% of the age-range in primary school grades 1-7, but the backlog is more than 10% and increasing numbers cannot get into Grade I. In the urban areas (eg. Lusaka, Kitwe and Ndola) the situation is particularly bad. There is over and under age enrolment so that up to at least 30% of 7-year olds may not be entering primary. There are double and triple sessions and sometimes between 50 and 80 in a class. There is critical shortage of text-books, materials and any kind of scientific equipment. These shortages affect the rural areas particularly badly. Quality is decreasing and this may result in an increasing rate of lapse back into illiteracy. The objective of effectively providing a place for all 7-year olds (the entry age) is receding at present and this has major implications for literacy levels.

At Grade IV approximately 10% drop out, especially in some rural areas as there are no places in Grade V and there is a major danger of these push-outs lapsing back into illiteracy, especially as there is little to read in the rural areas.

At Grade VII there is an approximate 20% progression to Grade VIII which pushes at least another 130,000 on to the job market each year. The progression rate from Grade 9-10 is now down to 20%. It is estimated by the year 2000 that another 2.5 million places will be needed, i.e. double those enrolled in 1984. 550 new classrooms will be needed each year for 15 years.

Whatever efforts are made in terms of self-help, community financing, donor agencies, self-reliance, school funds, the efforts of district councils, and parents paying fees and levies, the implementation of nine years education for all in the 1980s would have added 150% in real terms to the educational budget of the 70s and this has not been achieved. Adult illiteracy then may well increase.

Developments in Literacy work and a Proposed Campaign.

Although a variety of agencies have been concerned with literacy work including the Department of Continuing Education, the Womens' Affairs Committee of UNIP, Agricultural Extension, the Trade Unions, Zambia Consolidated Copper Mines, Zambia Railways, District Councils and the Churches, together with the main agency concerned with literacy work, the Department of Social Development in the Ministry of Labour, Social Development and Culture, adult and non-formal educators have not been able to deal with the increasing numbers of illiterates and those who lapse back into illiteracy. The Department of Social Development organises both basic and functional literacy programmes and faces an estimate made in 1980 of 41% illiteracy

(2.8 M) of whom 75% are women (these figures are crudely measured - Grade 3 and below or no schooling). The 1980 census indicate that 35.6% (of which 11.6% were male and 24% female) of the population (then 5.6 M) of 15 years and over had never been to school - a total of 1,002,202. The total will be greater due to those lapsing back into illiteracy and developments since 1980. In 1983-4 it was estimated that 1.8 M above the age of 10 were illiterate and that two-thirds of these were female. There are no clear casual relationships between levels of illiteracy, development and socio-economic status but low literacy levels correlate with low social and economic development levels, higher mortality rates, higher birth rates and poverty. Higher levels of illiteracy amongst women do then indicate serious obstacles to their social and economic advancement.

Illiteracy work began in Zambia with Dr Laubach's visit in 1948. Basic literacy programmes began after independence but the rate of relapse into illiteracy was serious due to the assumed irrelevance of the material to people's lives. In 1970 functional literacy was introduced largely focussed on maize production and in 1978 a pilot Functional Literacy, Health and Nutrition Programme later became integrated into the functional literacy programme relying on the staff of the Department of Social Development. Post©literacy programmes and libraries have never had sufficient resources and there is a dearth of appropriate reading materials, particularly in rural areas.

While the illiteracy rate fell from 67% in 1964 at the age of 21 (1 million) to 41% in 1980, the absolute number of illiterates increased to 2.8 M (from age 15) by 1980 and the figure will be higher now.

Except for one year, 1967, in which it was possible to enrol 17,000 illiterates, the Department of Social Development in each of the other years until 1986 has been able to make only 5,000 people literate. Together with the projected decline in enrolments in primary education, it appears that the numbers of illiterate people will increase each year unless a 10 year National Campaign planned to begin in 1990, International Literacy Year, becomes effective. A National Committee for International Literacy Year has been established.

In 1988 the UNIP Womens' Affairs Committee produced a programme "Towards the Elimination of Illiteracy amongst Women in Zambia", and discussions have been taking place with the Department of Social Development on the nature and scope of an integrated basic and functional literacy campaign. Whatever decisions are taken as to the nature of the campaign which will involve the Party and the mobilization of an array of concerned agencies, the main executing agency will be the Department of Social Development with its 342 Social Development Assistants who operate at field level in 238 sub-centres throughout the country. The reality of the conditions and low morale of these essential workers must be taken into account. They lack basic resources in educational materials - paper, pencils, primers, exercise books, seed, fertiliser and chalk, due to inadequate funding. They lack transport and cannot cover their areas. They often feel isolated, neglected, under-valued and are poorly paid as are most Zambian civil

Illiteracy and Structural Problems of Society

The degree of illiteracy and its persistence are measures of the depth of the structural problems of a society - that is, the uneven way the political and economic power is distributed, the political and economic policies and priorities are determined and the systems and institutions for carrying out these policies are organised. The extent of illiteracy is a reflection of a nation's collective failure to attach high priority to the values of the just society. There is no other way of explaining the phenomenon of a significant proportion of the citizenry remaining deprived of the means of surviving and functioning in society with human dignity. Hence, there are 30 million adults functionally illiterate in North America despite the fact that the two countries in that continent are amongst the richest in the world(1). In fact, enough examples exist to show that progress in literacy is not strictly a matter of the economic status of a country. Some of the poorest countries or regions within countries have in recent history made very substantial progress in a short period of time in both adult literacy and primary education. The commonly cited examples are Tanzania, Ethiopia, Sri Lanka, the Kerala State of India and China. Many other countries at substantially higher levels of national income lag far behind these countries in literacy rate.

In South Asia, for example, barring Sri Lanka and some parts of India, progress has been very slow in reducing illiteracy in the last 20 years. The total number of illiterates, in fact, has grown during this period with the number of female illiterates increasing at a faster rate. The alibi cannot be just the economic situation. The South-Asian countries have not suffered the same type of economic decline as sub-Saharan Africa or the severe recession in Latin America aggravated by the crushing external debt burden. The trend in South Asia has been of a moderate steady growth of the economy. Each of the countries in fact did initiate mass literacy programmes in recent years, but none produced significant results. A major weakness in varying degree in these programmes was the perception of the mass literacy programme as a campaign for transmitting the mechanical skills of identifying and copying the alphabet. The campaign failed to place literacy in the context of the structure of social inequities and to view it as a tool for a larger process of communication and learning with the aim of overcoming the handicaps the disadvantaged segments of society suffer. Thus the necessary organizational structures for mobilizing the enthusiasm and energy of the intended beneficiaries were not developed; the literacy programme was not made an integral part of a broader awareness-raising and learning effort by enlarging post-literacy learning possibilities; and the determination to invest the required financial resources was lacking. Another serious constraint is the limited capacity of the regimes in power to command the confidence and the support of the masses and motivate them to respond to a call for nationwide mobilization.

There is also a question of the concept of development and how central is the

THE RELATIONSHIP OF NON-FORMAL EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT

David Stephens, University of Sussex.

During this seminar we hope, in the limited time available, to explore the above relationship by focussing on two questions:

1) To what extent is effective action in the non-formal sector determined and limited by the formal educational system? i.e. economic/political forces? maintenance of elites? NFE cosmetic?

2) Given the above, what can good non-formal education contribute to development? i.e. particularly in terms of empowerment, literacy, health?

Let us for the moment consider the relationship of formal and non-formal education. The following paradigm is a useful framé of reference

PARADIGM CASES OF FORMAL AND NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Formal Education	Non-Gormal Education
PURPOSES	
Long term and general: expected to provide basis for future, therefore general in character.	Short-term and specific: meets learning needs and of individuals and inculcates specific knowledge, skills and attitudes.
Credential based: end-product often certificates to enable individuals to obtain specific socio-economic positions in society.	Non-credential based often giving tangible rewards such as improvements in material well-being productivity, self-awareness, etc.
TIMING	
Long-cycle: usually more than one year, often ten years or more.	Short-cycle: rarely more than two years, depends on achievement of learning objectives.
Preparatory: child-centred future-orientated.	Recurrent: depends on and individual's role and stage in life.
Ful-time: usually does not permit other parallel activities, especially work.	Part-time: timing to meet needs and convenience of clients.

CONTENT

Input-centred/standardised: basis of curriculum is standardised package of cognitive knowledge.	Output-centred and individualised: task or skill-centred: related to needs of participants.
Academic: isolated from environment and social action.	Practical: closely related to learner's environment.
Clientele determined by entry requirements: successful completion of lower levels is required for admission to higher levels.	Entry requirements determined by clientele; formal entry requirements not essential.

DELIVERY SYSTEM

Institution-based: takes place in "schools" which are education-specific.	Environmental-based: takes place in variety of settings; facilities are minimal, low-cost and not education specific.
Isolated: learners removed from own environments for long periods.	Community-related: environment is functionally related to learning.
Rigidly structured: around parameters of time and participants' age and performance; involves uniform entry points, and is sequential and continuous.	Flexibly structured: variety of relationships and sequences possible; varying degrees and types of structure.
Teacher-centred: labour intensive technology; emphasises teaching rather than learning; control vested in certified authorities.	Learner-centred: uses a variety of resources and technologies; emphasis on learning rather than teaching; facilitators rather than teachers.

Resource-intensive: involves high opportunity-cost of student time and draws resources from outside the community.	Resource-saving: utilises community facilities and personnel; low-cost facilities.

CONTROL

Externally controlled: curricula and standards externally determined and publicly controlled by national bureaucracies.	Self-governing: control via variety of agencies, often non-governmental; autonomy at local level with emphasis on local initiative, self-help and innovation
Hierarchical: internal control highly structured and based on role-defined relations.	Democratic: substantial control vested in participants and local community

(Source: Simkins T, Non-formal Education and Development, 1976, pp. 12-15)

The discussion of a Zambian innovatory course for trade unionists will help us explore a response to the first of the two questions listed above.

Group A: Skills training Modules

Module A1: Basic skills for trade union members. Trade union terms in simple English or local language. Simple exercises in clear thinking and speaking. Rousing interest in practical projects. Getting used to discussion. Simple arithmetic of wages and "personal economy".

Module A2: Skills for shop stewards.

Communication and human relations. Understanding agreements. Handling grievances. Simple administration. Arithmetic of wages. How to mobilise workers for practical development projects.

Module A3: Skills for branch officers.

Communications and human relations; how to make a short relevant speech. Planning and running meetings Letter writing and keeping minutes. Simple administration and trade union finance. Organising simple development projects.

Module A4: Skills for works councillors
Exercises in listening and note-taking and comprehension. Basic principle of human relations, communication and personnel management. Understanding productivity, balance sheets, job evaluation and incentive payments.

Module A5: Skills for part-time and full-time officers.
More advanced exercises of A3 type with stress on developing judgement and skills in communication and administration (general and financial).

Module A6: Skills for workers educators.
Communication skills and teaching methods and techniques. How to prepare and use teaching aids, such as audio-visual aids, case studies, role-plays etc. Principles of education planning and organization.

Module A7: Other specialist skills.
For example (a) Economics and statistic research staff; (b) Industrial Relations Court advisory staff; (c) Trade union staff specialising in works council matters (Industrial Relations Act 1971); (d) Members of "working parties" set up under Industrial Relations Act 1971; (f) Union press and publicity officers.

Group B: Information modules

Module B1: Basic trade union studies.
What are trade unions? Why join them? Trade union constitutions and rights and duties of members. Industrial relations, recognition and collective agreements. Basic labour laws. Safety at work.

Module B2: Basic political economy.
Humanism and Zambia's one-party participatory democracy. Basic economic terms and national development plans. Problems of rural development productivity, inflation and national income and prices policy. Personal economy - family budget, savings, co-operatives, banks and building societies.

Module B3: More advanced trade union studies.
Trade union history and structure; ZCTU role and constitution. Labour laws, especially Industrial Relations Act (1971). Social insurance and pension schemes - National Provident Fund and Workmen's Compensation. Safety at work. Collective bargaining including fringe benefits, promotion, job evaluation. Co-operatives and credit unions. International trade unionism. International Labour Organisation.

Module B4: More advanced political economy
Deeper study of Zambia's economic problems (internal and external). Statistics regarding economic development. Problems of worker's participation in planning. Population and

unemployment problems. Zambia and the Organisation of African Unity, United Nations and the problems of world trade.

Module B5: Other socialised topics.
(a) Industrial psychology, industrial sociology and personnel management. (b) Social structure and social change; (c) Trade unions and community development; (d) Trade unions and co-operatives and credit unions; (e) Theory and practice of central and local government; (f) Pan-Africanism, foreign policy and external relations; (g) Budgeting, book-keeping accounts; (h) General administration. (i) Information services, publicity and public relations.

It is unanimously agreed that national unions should concentrate mainly upon the basic modules (A1, A2, A3, B1, and B2); and that the Zambia Congress of Trade Unions, President's Citizenship College and other agencies should share the work in modules A4, A5, A6, A7, B3 and B5.

The Zambia congress of Trade Unions has also stressed that great emphasis should be given to political education in modules B2 and B4; and that Industrial Participatory Democracy should feature prominently in modules B3 and B4.

WORKSHOP A: NON-FORMAL EDUCATION (NFE) AND DEVELOPMENT

Report to plenary session.

The discussion hinged around the question of literacy provision

- who holds the decision-making power on funding/curriculum? - who controls the system? - literacy is not the only component of empowerment

A major function of literacy and NFE should be to culturise, ie. to establish, expand and enrich the culture and to promote socialization, including liberating and empowering the socially deprived to act together confidently.

The control of NFE: making it fit politico-educational policy is worrying. Governments will always try to control NFE. Therefore curriculum must be fought for so that it can become an agent for liberation and empowerment rather than of "domestication".

Commonly literacy and NFE programmes stop with the achievement of a given "literacy" level. And many relapse into illiteracy. This is a waste of money and nullification of much effort. All NFE programmes must therefore incorporate in planning the provisions for sustaining literacy levels, continuing education, libraries, local study groups etc. Having these things permanently running should be the goal of programmes, not just making people literate.

Link with development requires adequate training of teachers, empowerment and supervision. Just a few days training is derisory and - as often limited by finance - indicates low priority given.

Some Strategies and Ways Forward.

* identify who is and who should be making the decisions ("those that know"?)
* determine what is relevant within the context
* start with what is already there; flexibility; where there is demand or where there are resources.
* the role of the media in literacy: stimulates people to extend their interest
* remove stigma from NFE by taking on issues which everyone needs to know
* need to document programmes for possible replication elsewhere. Particularly successful initiatives started and maintained locally with little outside assistance. Build up bank of good practice and make it known.

It is not helpful to be too rigid about distinctions between formal and non-formal sectors.The essential need is to conduct critical analysis of the particular context and uncover the latent demand for education and the way in which it can be met by programme interventions. Programme design must be related to the particular circumstances and permit the establishment of a 'learning society' - e.g. by appropriate curriculum design and development and by taking into account relevant ethical and political considerations.

WORKSHOP B

DEFINITIONS AND POLITICS OF LITERACY.

WHICH LITERACIES ?

Brian Street, University of Sussex.

Different Definitions.

J. Ogbu (1990): "I take literacy to be the ability to read and write and compute in the form taught and expected in formal education", that is "synonymous with academic performance".

A. Reid (1988): "The old Indonesian ka©ga-nga alphabet... had no value either vocationally or in reading any established religious or secular literature. The explanation given for the persistence was the local custom of "manjau", a courting game whereby young men and women would gather in the evenings and the youths would fling suggestive quatrains written in the old script to the young women they fancied".

"Women (in pre-16th century S.E. Asia) took up writing as actively as men, to use in exchanging notes and recording debts and other commercial activities which were in the female domain". "Because both Islam and Christianity introduced a new script along with the new faith, their established pattern of a more restricted, school-based male literacy in most places drove out the old script... It is a curious paradox that the growth of a written culture probably reduced the number of people who could write by associating writing with the sacral and solemn"

M.Ahmed (ILY): "In the 1960's..... a distinction began to be made between "functional literacy" and ordinary literacy. It was as if literacy became functional only when linked with skill training, while literacy as a tool for communication and further learning, as a means for becoming effective parents or citizens and as a source of knowledge and information for individual self-fulfillment was non-functional".

IIEF Newsletter 1989, (quoted by J. Oxenham in *AERBB*,1990): "The 1 in 12 who persevered (in the Kenya literacy programme) are important because in comparison with people who continued to be illiterate, they scored systematically better in observations of knowledge, attitudes and behavioral practices.... Adults who have completed the programme tend to know more about health, nutrition, agriculture, etc. than the illiterates; they have less traditional attitudes and put new ideas more easily into practice'".

L. S. Saraswathi (ILY): "The concepts of literacy.... vary widely from seeing it as a mere technical skill to be acquired by people as a pre-requisite for their growth and development, to seeing it as a means of empowering people, in using one's own language for gaining power to take control over one's life situations. In other words it varies from literacy being the goal or an end in itself to literacy being a tool to gain power to have control over situations that affect their lives".

B. Street (1984): "I shall use the term "literacy" as a shorthand for the social practices and conceptions of reading and writing..... we would more appropriately refer to "literacies" than to any single "literacy".

"UNESCO, 1975 (Persepolis): ".. a distinction between the two main categories of function: the first economic in character, concerned with production

and with working conditions: the rest cultural in character, encouraging the development from primary consciousness to critical consciousness (the process of conscientization) and the active participation of adults in their own development".

Different Literacies.

Statements by developers regarding the need for literacy, the importance of literacy for development and the terrible consequences of "illiteracy", all assume that we know what "literacy" is and that when people acquire it they will somehow get better.

Behind these assumptions is usually a very western-orientated and narrow image of what "literacy" is, a model based upon the particular uses and associations of literacy in recent European and North American history, one that gives little or no scope to the sheer variety and richness of local literacies in different parts of the world (and even to the variety within western societies themselves).

Until these narrow assumptions about "literacy" are challenged and modified to take account of the cultural complexity of "literac-in-practice", then the literacy campaigns conducted by Unesco and other international and national agencies will continue to register high drop-out rates, frequent atrophy of skills and continued resistance from those for whom the meanings of the imported literacy are often quite different from their own. I would like to suggest how some of the new thinking about literacy being developed amongst linguists, psychologists and anthropologists might have a role to play in these practical campaigns and in helping to overcome the problems they face at present.

The major challenge to traditional models of literacy in recent research has been to the assumption that literacy is a single autonomous thing that, once acquired, has direct consequences for everything from mental processes and individual liberty on the one hand to economic take-off for nations as a whole on the other. According to this "autonomous" model of literacy, it has been assumed that there is a single direction in which literacy development can be traced, an evolutionary pyramid at the top of which stands western, alphabetic, "essay-text" literacy. In contrast, other varieties of literacy practice, to the extent that they were identified at all, were judged inferior: Qoranic literacy, for instance, or those indigenous scripts used for only one or two specific purposes, have been referred to as "backward" or "restricted". Ironically, it is the supposed universality and culture-free quality of this "literacy" that is taken to justify the intervention of literacy workers in the first place.

Recent work in a variety of academic subjects has demonstrated the problems with such expectations. Harvey Graff, for instance, in his aptly entitled work, *The Literacy Myth*, points out that the association of literacy with social mobility, economic progress, escaping from poverty and so on is not borne out by the statistics.

The reason behind the attempt to spread literacy through a national schooling

system has often been, not as was claimed, to educate the masses but rather to control them, to teach them the disciplines necessary on the factory floor and to assimilate the variety of language uses to a single standard - that of the ruling group. Lessons in "literacy" for example have frequently involved students being asked to read aloud so that their pronunciation could be "corrected": homogenising dialect rather than broadening minds and opportunities.

The traditional view of literacy has also been challenged at a theoretical level by anthropologists and cross-cultural linguists, who have discovered that there are many different forms of literacy practice across the world and that literacy campaigns mostly fail to make use of this resource. These campaigns frequently assume that their "clients" come to literacy *tabula rasa*, as though they had no knowledge before the teacher arrived. The new research on the other hand, suggests that most people, wherever they are located, have had some acquaintance with literacy practices and that it may be better pedagogy, as well as more ideologically sound, to build on what they have rather than to ignore or debase it.

Some peoples have developed their own script, such as the Vai in Liberia, many of whom are able to shift between their indigenous writing system and Arabic and English systems according to the demands of the situation. Psychologists who have studied these various uses to test for the effects of "literacy without schooling", have concluded that literacy in itself does not make much difference to the higher order cognitive skills, although certain forms of schooling might. The whole basis on which so many literacy campaigns have begun has been challenged and a more culturally-sensitive and relevant approach to the subject is called for.

A few anthropologists have begun to study this variety of literacy practices and to discover the richness and complexity of what has been ignored in traditional, western-orientated campaigns.

Ruth Finnegan, an anthropologist working in Africa amongst peoples with rich oral traditions of story telling and of play on language, discovered that all of the mental skills and operations attributed to literacy by previous scholars were clearly present in oral discourses: there was not a "Great Divide" between orality and literacy as had previously been assumed.

According to the traditional assumptions, literacy is associated with and can be expected to produce 'metalinguistic awareness'- an explicit awareness of the nature of the language one is using, a propensity to play on words and to elaborate rich and ambiguous meanings: in other words, an ability to use language actively rather than being a passive recipient of meanings handed down from above.

It is in order to develop such explicitness and creativity that many (though not all) literacy campaigns are designed. And yet the work of Ruth Finnegan and others suggests that people are actually quite capable of developing these things in oral discourse. The implication is not that we

should abandon literacy transfers, but we do now clearly have to look a little more deeply at what it is that is being achieved by literacy campaigns.

Closer to home, anthropologists have been studying local variations of literacy practices in America and the UK and again discovering much of value that was being ignored by schooling and the particular literacy associated with it. Shirley Brice Heath, for instance, spent ten years studying children in various communities in the Piedmont Carolinas and discovered complex language uses, particularly associated with story telling, that were not built upon once they went to school. The people she studied used literacy, for instance, in a "collaborative" way rather than privately: they would gather around someone on a verandah when they received a letter and negotiate its meaning communally, compose a reply and discuss the style and genre that was appropriate. Heath also shows how children with such backgrounds had difficulty in adjusting to the expectations of the classroom, where literacy was considered a sole, separate and silent activity.

I would like to conclude by suggesting some ways in which the new approaches to literacy theory might have direct relevance to classroom practice or to more informal literacy campaigns. One derives from the understanding of the "collaborative" nature of literacy cited above. In a number of places there are currently experiments, both at school level and in adult literacy programmes, in peer group learning and collaborative literacy. Students, for instance, write journals for the teacher and for each other and receive written responses in the same book, thus building up a literacy document that records a process of dialogue rather than being simply an end product for testing purposes.

Writing is treated as a process of direct communication with features similar to those traditionally associated with oral interaction. This movement is also associated with the shift in theory to the recognition of a "mix" of oral/literate skills rather than the viewing of literacy and orality as separate skills. In daily life, after all, the written word is usually embedded in an oral context; people speak around it, write things down, read and speak again.

A mixed repertoire of speech-and-literacy, where in a sense the whole is greater than the sum of its parts, is frequently required by modern work situations and the implications for classroom practice and for worldwide literacy campaigns are clearly considerable.

My main point, however, is not to suggest a particular pedagogy or method of imparting literacy, but rather to suggest that more attention be paid to the variety and complexity of literacy practices and literacy/orality interactions across the world and to consider how an awareness of this could be built into the literacy campaigns of the 1990s.

DEFINITIONS AND POLITICS

Didacus Jules, St. Lucia

1. What is Literacy ?

Over the past two decades literacy has become a rallying point for people of all persuasions. It appears that virtually everyone agrees on its importance and centrality to modern daily life; yet when examined more carefully it is evident that there are many divergent and contradictory notions of literacy. What is particularly interesting is that, notwithstanding the differences in these multiple definitions of literacy, there are some essential commonalities.

* it is generally recognised that literacy has something to do with empowerment- even if what that constitutes can be deeply contested - and that consequently literacy contributes to change (even though the character of that change is also a subject of contention).

* it is agreed that literacy is a vitally important skill - even if the morphology of that skill has been mapped and remapped in many different configurations; and even if there is even less agreement about the precise uses of such a skill.

* literacy, it is commonly felt, has something to do with reading and writing. Yet what that reading and writing involves, what it is about, how it is done, by whom and to what ends are the elements of the great debate on literacy. In the process of that debate we have come to understand literacy as a socially and culturally constructed phenomenon- relative to time, space and social context. Literacy we now admit has different meanings in different cultural, social, spatial and temporal settings.

What is considered basic literacy in London today in 1990 among university academics may not be the same as what industrial workers such as the Yorkshire miners consider to be so. What is now defined as literacy in 1990 in London is not what it was in 1890. Neither does the definition of functional literacy in New York in 1990 necessarily correspond to what it means to be "functionally" literate in a small rural Caribbean village today.

In a provocative article "The Standard Picture of Literacy and Its Critics" (1), Ian Winchester traced the evolution of historical norms out of which come our present conception of literacy and which contain several important- often unquestioned- assumptions about the meaning and uses of literacy. Both Street (2) and Winchester conclude that these assumptions come out of the experience of literacy in the western countries and that such inferences should not be accepted uncritically.

Although literacy is often spoken about as a mechanical ability - 'the ability to read and to write - the experiences of the last decade however point us to a new conception of what "to be literate" means. As a result we have adopted the habit of speaking now about becoming literate in relation to computers, politics, geography, mathematics, science etc.

Within this frame of reference, literacy is clearly perceived as the transmission, appropriation (and more problematically)

the construction of meaning. Literacy is, in a very elemental way, ultimately about making sense of the world and reshaping it; it is about incorporating and creating new meanings in our intellectual horizons and in our lives. But there are political and economic forces which inflect this process. Giroux points out for example that "In the United States, the language of literacy is almost exclusively linked to popular forms of liberal and right-wing discourse that reduce it to either a functional perspective tied to narrowly conceived economic interests or to an ideology designed to initiate the poor, the underprivileged and minorities into the logic of a unitary dominant cultural tradition"(3).

The process of what Apple (1985) refers to as the "commodification of culture"(4) is increasingly resulting (particularly in the industrialized countries) in definitions of culture and literacy which are subordinated to the logic of capital, racism and patriarchy.

The notions of cultural literacy popularized by Hirsh, Bloom et al, which treat literacy as being simply a mechanical act of familiarization with the trivia of dominant culture - a reduction of literacy to lists of dates, names, terms- are among the most deplorable examples of this commodification.

The Social Configuration of Illiteracy

Definitions of literacy have always been made by "those who knows". Literacy has always been defined congruent with the terms of a dominant culture by those who are privileged within this culture. They have delineated "the requirements" of skills and knowledge that are deemed necessary for the attainment of literacy.

A meaningful definition of literacy, I wish to argue, should not only delineate the "requirements" of knowledge but as importantly should also articulate the social and conjunctural reality of illiteracy. In other words, it is necessary to include the definitions of precisely those who have been marginalized by their location in a culture of silence - with all of the contradictions that this entails. If literacy is ultimately, as we stated earlier, really about making sense of the world and reshaping it, then the voices and expectations of "the silent ones" should be part of its articulation.

To say this however is not to romanticize the illiterate. As Apple has consistently shown in his work on the dialectics of education and power, the appropriation of space and voice by working people should be viewed as a problematic. The expectations held by illiterates include dominant ideological norms (especially with reference to the functionality of literacy) while at the same time encompassing postures of resistance and more positive affirmations of self and identity.

The exploration of these contradictions ought to be part of the process of literacy - having the illiterate explore the meanings of literacy as they define it, the uses that their concrete existence prescribes and their strategic aspirations. (In the Grenada Revolution for example, the Centre for Popular Education encouraged the working people to reflect on the

meaning of an education that "takes you from where you are to where you want to be!"). Treating these contradictions as a problematic opens the way for critical reflection on the social construction of literacy and the structural bases of illiteracy. It permits investigation of how people's aspirations are inflected by myths which present education as being the panacea of underdevelopment and the means of individual mobility.

Another dimension of the social and conjunctural reality of illiteracy is understanding what is its social and geographical configuration in today's world. UNESCO estimates were that in 1980 there were 814 million illiterates in the world, and projections to the 21st Century are that this figure will increase to one billion. These same estimates indicate that 48% of the adult population of the Third World and 70% of that of the poorest 23 countries in the world are illiterate. In other words, the geographies of illiteracy, poverty and despair are coincidental - in the industrialized as well as the underdeveloped countries. Gabriel Carceles(5) contends that "it is clear that most of the world's illiterates are found in the poorest countries and consistently in the poorest groups, particularly in rural areas, with women more affected than men".

Over one billion people live in extreme poverty (which includes about 300 million children) and most of them are concentrated in the Third World. Over 500 million persons or almost 50% of the work force is either unemployed or underemployed. These statistics certainly do not support the assumption that illiteracy is the cause of poverty and inequality - what they exemplify is that illiteracy, being coincidental with other social ills, is an expression of structural inequality and injustice.

Part of the mythologization of literacy is built around the manipulation of the geographies of illiteracy and poverty. In much of the literature (including some of the material promoting ILY), the advocacy of literate implies that it constitutes a solution to many social problems. Literacy itself is promoted as being the answer to unemployment and disease as if the lack of jobs or the prevalence of disease was the fault of the illiterate and not of the system which produced them.

People are not born literate, therefore the existence of illiteracy is a manifestation of social deficits - the question "why did so many not develop the skill of reading and writing?" points not to intelligence but to opportunity. Just as the growing gap between those-who-have and those-who-have-not points to the working of inequality in society, so too does the gap between "those who knows" and "those who don't knows".

Nowhere in the world has literacy by itself created employment, cured disease or built houses. Is it correct to assume that teaching people to read everyday materials and to fill out commonly used forms would give them a better life? Did we really believe that, merely by becoming literate, hundreds could get jobs or become more productive? Where literacy has succeeded are in places where the poor have been actively

engaged in trying to change the conditions of their existence. Literacy gives hope and dignity, it gives people confidence in their capacity to achieve but the better life is not created by literacy. It is made by the poor acting on behalf of the poor.

In other words, for literacy to be meaningful, it must be a first step in a process of empowerment of the poor and of the marginalized.

2. Literacy and Power

It should be evident from the preceding discussion that the essential questions associated with literacy are not simply pedagogical but political. Yet I would hesitate to talk about literacy and politics since politics is so commonly conceived of as having a separate sphere of existence that "intrudes" on so many aspects of our civil life and which, in practice, is invariably sectarian and partisan.

A more productive conceptualization of the relationship between literacy and politics is to consider instead the affiliation of literacy to power.

There are three basic arguments in favour of looking at the intersection of literacy and power:

1. because power is the fundamental dynamic in politics;
2. because the notion of power allows us to define the meaning of literacy at several levels:

   - personal (individual empowerment/fulfillment)
   - community (civil society)
   - State (liberation)

3. because it allows for the incorporation of the dynamics of race, class and gender (i.e. how is illiteracy amplified by class, race and gender distinctions?).

There is hardly any need in a paper of this kind to explicate the ways in which power acts as the fundamental dynamic of politics.

Whether seen as derived from class location or from some other social dispensation, power is invariably linked to privilege and/or domination; and politics is the organised expression of the struggle to wield it. Taken at this level of abstraction, power appears to be a very amorphous entity but it assumes definite shapes and consequences when viewed from within daily struggles and experiences.

The connection between literacy and power is refracted in multiple incidents and experiences in the daily social existence of an illiterate. Adult learners throughout the Caribbean have recounted many experiences of exploitation, abuse, ridicule and oppression arising from their inability to read and write.

There have been for example innumerable stories in the Caribbean of rural persons having their land and property placed in jeopardy by signing documents which they are unable to read and understand. In interaction with the private sector and public bureaucracy, illiterates have faced ridicule and contempt in overt as well as subtle forms.

Their humiliation has been compounded in cases where the mother tongue differs from the official language (an issue that will be examined in greater detail later in this paper).

Other incidents include farmers unable to follow the instructions for chemical farm inputs; domestic accidents resulting from misreading (or the inability to read) labels of poisonous substances. In recent times, we have witnessed deliberate attempts to capitalize on illiteracy for partisan political gain-in the St. Lucian general election of 1982, one of the contending political parties published a carefully touched up photograph in which the face of an opponent had been superimposed on the body of a Cuban official who was showing Fidel around a farm. The message was that this politician had made a deal with Castro to confiscate the cows of St. Lucian farmers if his party won the election!

In a few of these instances, illiteracy was the immediate pretext for exploitation; in the majority however, it amplified the capacity for abuse. While literacy may have provided a limited opportunity for the improvement of the individual condition, it could not, by itself, offer collective restitution.

At a deeper psychological level, the prevailing social perceptions of illiteracy depict it as a result of a personal deficiency or as the result of the failure of the individual to learn. Faced with such stereotypes the illiterate is compromised with feelings of shame, low personal esteem and a lack of self confidence.

When one considers that the majority of the projected one billion illiterates are from the "poorest groups" with a concentration of women and rural folk, then not only are the demographic significance of the psychological and material constraints apparent but the gendered and class character of the conformations that benefit from the marginalization of these strata becomes clear.

Illiteracy can therefore be used as a justification for disempowering social groups. In St. Lucia for example, illiterate banana farmers are excluded from holding leadership positions even at branch level in their "own" producer's organization, the St. Lucia Banana Grower's Association, as a consequence of Article 15 (1) provision G of the Act of incorporation of the association which states that:

> *"the office of delegate or other member of the Managing Committee of a District Branch shall ipso facto be vacated:*
> *(g) If he is unable to speak, and unless incapacitated by blindness or other physical cause, to read the English Language with a degree of proficiency sufficient to enable him to take an active part in the proceedings of the management committee".*

In this way illiteracy is the pretext used by the landowning plantocracy to effectively exclude peasant farmers (who make far more intensive use of the land) from exercising their democratic right to leadership. Given the democratic pretensions of the society, exclusion cannot be framed in overt terms; other justifiable grounds must be found to

achieve this objective. Thus by means of what David Hogan calls "displacement politics" (6), effective control of the association by large planters is maintained. In a producer's association committed to the fullest democratic participation of the membership, illiteracy would have been handled either by providing opportunities for members to achieve the levels of literacy required for this participation or by some means other than exclusion from leadership.

In general, it is largely through the displacement politics of literacy that so-called minorities, women and (especially the rural) working class are excluded, disenfranchised, and marginalized in what is increasingly being referred to as an era of democratic reclamation. In the industrialized democracies such as the United States, it is no accident that with functional illiteracy "among minority youth...run(ning) as high as 40%" education has become a benchmark of social opportunity.

Literacy is therefore another matrix of social achievement through which the dynamics of class, race and gender are consolidated. A product of inequality, it-through a perverse social logic -becomes a justification for further injustice. So that when people of colour, women and workers claim their place as equals, the encumbrances are metamorphosed from overt issues of exclusion and prejudice to a crisis of "adequate" educational preparation to assume equal roles.

3. Language and Empowerment: The Power of Literacy.

The challenge for us, in recognizing the intersections of literacy and power is one of empowerment. How can literacy serve to confront the problematic of power and alienation? How can it contribute to the reconstruction of identities and the re-definition of humanity? What is its capacity for exposing the mythologies through which inequality and injustice are disguised and perpetuated?

Because literacy involves language its major contribution can be to shatter the prison of language and to kindle the creative imagination. It can help make possible the visualization of a better world by those in whose suffering lies the necessity of its realization. The power of literacy lies in the power of language to determine the parameters of perception and consequently to set the limits of strategic rationality. This power however is not easily realized - it is not intrinsic to the process of literacy. As Freire has pointed out, this power is a two edged sword; literacy can serve the functions of domestication or the ends of human liberation.

To fulfill an emancipatory purpose, literacy must be based on the language and expression of the illiterate nurturing a facility for critical expression and reflection. Freire was unequivocal about this:

> "literacy can only be emancipatory and critical to the extent that it is conducted in the language of the people".(7)

This is the prerequisite to confronting the languages of power and making our own words to change the contours of consciousness and reconceptualize ourselves, our relation to the world. Ann Berthoff reminds us that:

> "We are sometimes so used to thinking of language as a communication
>
> medium that it can be surprising to discover that, or to be reminded, that language is the means of making those meanings that we communicate"(8)

Thus the significance of embracing the language and cultural expression of the learners as vehicles of literacy. For us in the Caribbean, the exploration of the indigenous languages of resistance- the Creoles, and the languages of calypso, rastafari and rap-and their potential for critical literacy has not been undertaken. Yet if we accept that critical literacy "involves the ability to evaluate what is read or heard with respect to the interests being served or the positions taken (and that it)....enhances the ability to mould one's own world through naming and constructing models of preferred social and personal life"(9), then the urgency of this project cannot be overlooked.

In asserting the necessity of using the language of the people as a vehicle for critical literacy, one can ignore neither the pragmatic aspirations resulting from the way in which language is ordered in our societies, nor the desirability of enhancing the capacity of the working people to communicate at an international level.

The issue of whose language to use can be a problematic one. In a survey(10) conducted in two rural villages in St. Lucia when they were asked to state their preferred language of literacy, the vast majority of potential adult learners (56% in one case and 61% in the other) asked for literacy in English and Kweyol; as distinct from 39% and 32% requesting English only or 5% and 4% respectively desiring literacy in Kweyol only. These results are I think fairly typical of bi-ingual societies in which the language of the people is not officially recognised. It was a pragmatic statement of the learner's recognition of the necessity of English as the language of power while seeking to preserve the cultural integrity of the "lang mama mwen" - their mother tongue.

4. Literacy, Contemporary Politics and the Third World.

In concluding this discussion of the definitions and politics of literacy, I wish to place the foregoing considerations in a global context. We are living through an era of epic and global political changes superimposed on a scientific and technological revolution which far exceeds any previous cycle of human invention. All of this carries profound implications, not simply for our conceptions of education and literacy but even for our most commonplace notions of identity, democracy and sovereignty.

The changes are truly kaleidoscopic: *glastnost* and the ending of the cold war... the democratic revitalization of Eastern Europe... increasing low intensity warfare in the Third World... the Nicaraguan election results... the appropriation of

democratic meaning by the right (democracy as the freedom of individual enterprise- not democracy as worker self-management and self-emancipation). And the prediction of precisely what all of this portends for the world in general and the Third World in particular is anyone's guess.

Two things are indisputably clear however:

1. That the economic and political situation in the Third World is likely to deteriorate drastically and, within that conjecture, education will experience severe cutbacks and further deficits leading to greater incidences of illiteracy;

2. That the integrity and conditions of human existence in the Third World will require far greater critical consciousness for the sake of survival and more so if we are to construct "models of preferred social and personal life".

The outlook for education and for the eradication of illiteracy in the 21st Century is extremely bleak; already structural adjustment programmes and policies have resulted in severe cutbacks in social programmes, and innumerable studies have shown that the burden of these policies are falling on the backs of the poorest sectors. Educational opportunity is receding rather than expanding.

If we are to judge by their present response to the crisis of the economy and the state, the governments of the Third World will be virtually powerless to handle this situation. (In the industrialized West as equally as the Third World, the state is abdicating its social responsibilities). As is happening now in those countries most acutely affected by the debt burden, the poor will have to adopt more and more creative strategies of survival and resistance. In the final analysis, our most fundamental resource will be our capacity to think critically, creatively and collectively.

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WORKSHOP B: DEFINITIONS AND POLITICS OF LITERACY

Report to Plenary.

The following points and questions were put before the plenary session by the different groups:

Does literacy help people to think more critically or is this an assumption? Are people who don't have literacy equally capable of thinking critically?

Do literate people have access to source material?

People articulate their needs and do their agricultural work without literacy.

What goes into the "box" called literacy? We often credit to literacy what is actually belonging to other areas.

Many claims for literacy are made with no attempt to justify them

Can literacy be perceived as learning the skills of forming letters and decoding words? Would any individual or community of people perceive this as a relevant need for which they are prepared to sacrifice time in acquiring such a skill? How would the literacy worker motivate these people and sustain their interest during this difficult process?

Can literacy workers assume that individuals or groups of people have a need for active participation in development, in critical thinking, increased production or power over one's life; and assume that these needs will be met by imparting the skills of reading and writing?

Is it realistic to believe that the need for attaining the skills of reading and writing is equally valued by everyone? Can people in cities for example have their literacy needs met by depending upon specialization - reciprocal services? Do all the people in the village want to read and write, i.e. are they all prepared to sacrifice time in order to acquire the skills?Problems with the "academic" definition of literacy: it leaves out literacy for communication, for non-educational purposes, for recreation etc.It overplays the "scientific" character of literacy and its implications for ways of thinking, rationality etc.It underplays the local character of literacies and of community practices that do not involve literacy

Whose definition of literacy we employ is a political question in the broadest sense.

The rhetoric of literacy - about the necessity of getting literacy for development and progress - frequently disguises the true causes of poverty and hardship eg. debt

One ideal is to let a community decide when and what literacy it wants and to ask for appropriate assistance when it is ready: some drop-in/out centres already have this character, can they be extended to communities as a whole?

Literacy as a "poison well"! It can mislead people into believing they will achieve jobs, mobility etc. whilst in many cases they are simply being trained for discipline and control, with little material benefit.

Should we give formal education to all? Could it lead to subversive behaviour?

Women make their choices: concerned with the welfare of their families. What

literacy is needed to help them in these ways? They have often included other components in their literacy eg. rural health.

Can we avoid embedding our beliefs and values in the literacy we are giving? Which literacy and what ideology goes with it? People do not want to think they are passing on their ideology. All literacy campaigns are based on assumptions.

WORKSHOP C

SETTING UP AND SUSTAINING A PROGRAMME

REFLECTIONS ON THE BOTSWANA NATIONAL LITERACY PROGRAMME (NLP)

E. K. Townsend Coles, Oxford

Historical note.

In Botswana, as in most countries, literacy work is not new. Leaders such as Khama the Great in the last century had urged adults to learn how to read and write, and since their establishment, Christian Missions regarded literacy as an essential part of their endeavours.

What was new in 1978, when the Department of Non-formal Education (DNFE) was established, was the concern that literacy instruction, including numeracy, should be available nationwide. The notes which follow concern problems and issues raised when a national enterprise is being embarked upon. Several of the matters raised are relevant to the planning and sustaining of smaller scale operations.

Since the Government of Botswana wished there to be as quick an introduction of the NLP as was reasonably possible, the following time-scale was adopted:1979: Consultation. Initial planning and preparations.1980: Experimental pilot projects.1981: Introduction nationwide of the NLP.Year of Consultation and Initial Planning.

NB. These notes exclude consideration of decisions which had to be taken concerning the teaching/learning situation and method, and the content of the learning materials, since these are being considered in the parallel workshop on "teaching and learning" (workshop D).

The following are some of the matters which had to be considered during the year of the consultation. Paragraphs marked * indicate decisions taken in Botswana. They are quoted not because they are necessarily correct nor that they apply in other situations, but simply as examples of how one country tackled the issues involved.

1 Government approval.
Can a national literacy programme be established other than with the approval of government? Is political support essential?

* When the Ministry of Education proposed launching a literacy programme, an inter-ministerial committee was appointed, chaired by a senior official of the Ministry of Finance and Development Planning, to consider the implications and make recommendations.

2. What form ought a national literacy programme take?
There are examples of mass short-term literacy campaigns, longer term gradual national programmes, selective locally based endeavours, etc.. Which is the form which politically, culturally and economically is most acceptable?

* A long-term al-embracing programme, planned and financed initially for five years.

3. For whom is the programme intended?
Is the programme to be directed towards specific groups in society, or is it to be more generally directed towards all illiterate people? What definition is to be adopted for literacy (Workshop B) and how applied? If a general programme is envisaged, is it culturally necessary to make separate provision for women, men,

youths?

* The UNESCO definition of literacy was adopted. The programme would be open to all who felt the need for learning opportunities, but it would be entirely voluntary for each person to decide whether to enrol or not. Later, as the programme became increasingly popular, it was decided that participants could remain in a literacy group for a maximum of three years.

4. Which language(s)?
Note should be taken that political rather than pedagogical reasons may determine which language(s) is (are) to be used

* Initially Setswana only. (In Botswana there are two official languages, Setswana and English).

5. What organization is necessary?
Is the programme to be a government one or is it to be sponsored by non - governmental agencies, or a combination of both? What form of organization is needed at local, intermediate and national levels? How far should it be, realistically how far can it be, "bottom-up"?

* An inter-ministerial National Literacy Committee was established working with District Extension Teams (to plan district strategy and tactics) and Village Extension Teams. Voluntary organizations and the University were represented on the national committee. As many decisions as possible were taken by participants and at the local level.

6. By whom is the programme to be carried out?
If it is a government sponsored programme, which Ministry is most appropriate, or ought it to be an inter-ministerial endeavour? What "staff" is required at the different levels to sustain the programme? At the work-face who ought to be the amateurs or group leaders? Should they be paid or should their work be a voluntary act of service? In part this issue will be considered in Workshop D.

* Two programmes were established concurrently. The official programme would be run by Ministry of Education staff with headquarters department (DNFE), district level supervisors and part-time locally selected group leaders who are paid a small honorarium.

The unofficial programme, carried out by voluntary organizations, churches, industrial undertakings, etc., for which the Ministry supplied materials without charge and trained staff.

7. Who will train the staff?
Differing kinds of training are required. Who should undertake this work, and of what form?

* The literacy group leaders were trained by the DNFE staff. Eventually the University provided Certificate and Diploma courses for full-time staff.

8. How financed?
Two issues have to be considered. What overall finance is required to sustain the programme and how ought this to be raised? How far ought the participants be

expected to contribute and in what form? Clearly these are matters which must be settled before a national programme can be embarked upon.

* The programme was incorporated in the Ministry budget, extra funds being sought and obtained from outside donors.

The programme was entirely free to participants, as was the case of primary schooling.

9. How ought on-going research and evaluation be incorporated in the programme?
Although literacy is probably the most documented branch of non-formal education, there are always matters which require locally based research, and formative evaluation is essential. By whom should these responsibilities be undertaken? What statistical data are necessary? How can all involved be helped to be active in evaluation? The need is to keep data collection as simple as possible. Has the extent of illiteracy been determined through the national census?

* Initially the University was unable to help. Eventually it was possible for the DNFE to appoint its own Research and Evaluation officer. Statistical data was kept to a minimum and as simple as possible, bearing in mind the low academic level of field staff.

10. What supporting activities to a literacy programme are needed?
Workshop A will have considered the relationships between literacy programmes and national development.

How can a literacy programme emphasizing reading, writing and numbers be associated with other development activities such as agricultural extension, health education, rural and urban improvement schemes, community development etc

*Every endeavour (despite setbacks) was made to foster co - operation at all levels. Venues for literacy groups included not only schools but also health clinics, etc..

11. What literature is needed?
This will be considered in workshop D. Here it is noted that there needs to be a good variety of reading for new literates, appropriately written and styled. In addition to instructional and do-good material, new literates are as interested in reading stories, poems, articles on topical subjects etc. as any other people. A suitable newspaper should be available from the commencement (if not before!) of a literacy programme.

* DNFE published a monthly broadsheet from the commencement of the programme. Maximum use of air-time on Radio Botswanawas taken up.

12. What follow-on arrangements should be made?
It is essential that a literacy programme should not be an isolated operation. It may not be the first learning requirement of many; it is clearly not the last. How far can a literacy programme be dovetailed in with the formal education system and with formal training available through various channels? What are the difficulties?

* Despite efforts, the response of those in formal education was disappointing.

13. Public Relations:
The importance of public relations and of keeping the nation as a whole, including

politicians and administrators, aware of the plans for the programme.

* Annually, members of parliament were informed of progress. Newspaper articles and radio broadcasts helped to maintain national interest.

Other notes.
The Workshop will probably not have time to examine issues arising after the actual commencement and continuation of the programme. Here it should be noted that anything which is introduced at the planning and experimental stages must be capable of being replicated when the programme is nationwide.

Throughout these notes please read literacy to include numeracy.

The Botswana programme is fully documented in my book *Let the People Learn* (Manchester Monographs) ISBN 0 902252 10 0 available through booksellers or through Haigh and Hochland, Precinct Centre, Oxford Road, Manchester M13 9QA

Lunch time is a time for relaxation for John Hastings, who has worked in Bangledesh and other countries.

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CASE STUDIES FROM INDIA

Moitraye Mukhapadyaya, University of Sussex

In Ghana literacy programmes had all closed down. Why? There were a number of reasons: national politics; the lack of a local core of workers; the lack of monitoring of programmes; economic constraints; the rhetoric was "top-down", e.g. "giving" literacy; who is motivating whom?

How far do these factors apply elsewhere?

In India, there is a clear distinction between National programmes and those run by NGOs. The rhetoric of the State is for adult education and Non-Formal Education but in reality they have shifted the responsibility to the local sector without also shifting resources. There are, nevertheless, advantages as well as disadvantages in this situation, the primary gain being the independence and local focus it provides to groups working with literacy students. NGOs have developed a rich and idealistic tradition and have managed to obtain funds from international agencies and even from the Government. Two programmes in India illustrate this:

1) Rural East India: In 1979 a local literacy programme was set up by an NGO following Land Reforms and the hopes these had raised amongst peasants. There were meetings and discussions in the village by NGO members but these at first involved landless labourers being addressed by middle class planners. The locals' aspirations were for self-respect in relation to access to land and to reading and writing: literacy was bound up with the specific situation of land reform. The NGO discovered that they had to wait for locals to volunteer for classes rather than set them up "top down". The question of who is the animator, already raised in a number of earlier sessions at the Seminar, was answered in this case in local terms: a local literate person who had the "respect" of the learners. The training of animators focussed on starting and sustaining a programme. A contradiction emerged between the local tradition of teaching and learning, which was authoritarian, and the ambitious goals of the programme which were concerned with consciousness raising and changing values through participation. Members of the NGO found that they had to continually re-define their objectives.

2) Calcutta squatters: The literacy programme here emerged as a response to, virtually a rebellion against, the situation people found themselves in: no amenities or services and a threat of eviction. For the NGO, the question became how to relate this situation and community aspirations to the rhetoric of programme aims. The nature of the local economy imposed different constraints on different members of the community: children, for instance, were available for literacy classes only one hour a day at fixed times because they had to work, men were resistant to the whole thing and this created constraints for women. The programme had to be appropriate to these constraints and to show respect. As with the rural programme, animators had to be people with local respect: those who had been active in resistance to the threat of eviction were highly respected at this point of time and the most appropriate to become animators.

Conclusions:

1) the socio-political situation needs to be known well. An NGO has to build around experience and fit in with local timing and aspirations.
2) it needs to plan with the people
3) you have to wait for local people to volunteer
4) animators have to be selected for their "respect" in the community

Teaching methods involved the use of local folk drama, puppets, song critiques etc.

Monitoring of the effects of the literacy programme in these contexts had to be continuous: people came in and out of the classes at different times.

The Calcutta programme is still running. Sustaining the programme depended on its being the responsibility of community members: particular parts of the programme were specifically geared to local working children.

Outcomes were presented not in terms of careers, as in many formal programmes: but a library was built locally, reinforcing a point in one of the earlier sessions that part of the aims of a programme should be follow-through. A major aim for participants - as in many adult literacy programmes in the UK - was for self-respect. It was not seen as a "road" to anywhere but as a development of self-identity and confidence.

A major social contradiction that had to be worked through was that traditionally education had been associated only with an elite and with local stratification, whilst at the same time people lower in the hierarchy aspired to education to "get to the top".

The next problem for the programme was of materials for the new literates. The NGO is applying to a resource agency for funds to set up a community newspaper.

WORKSHOP C: SETTING UP AND SUSTAINING A PROGRAMME

Report to Plenary Session.

The following themes and issues appeared in most of the reports and the lists on the flip charts:

Ideology and purposes have been stressed throughout the seminar: they appear on all the flip charts, perhaps due to the way the seminar was structured, with theory and political discussion on the first day

Don't necessarily start with literacy - or end with it

The need to plan post - literacy programmes at point of starting up (this reflects some of the themes of the public session, notably Manzoor Ahmed's opening address)

Self-respect is a key factor in sustaining a programme, respect for animators by programme organizers. Self-motivation and respect are key issues. A gestation period may be necessary, people have to be self-motivated; the organizers may have to wait until they receive a request for assistance.

The need for libraries, local materials, newspapers etc. - these can contribute to this need for self-respect

Why UNESCO programmes have failed: overdo resources at start, underdo resources for sustaining. Literacy is long term, not short term

The role of the agency is as a catalyst. Credibility of NGOs on the ground; people are often suspicious of governments; and many such programmes are seen to be subversive.

Formal/non-formal dimension, statutory/non-statutory; need for flexible provision: objectives may change. Build on local grassroots and choose animators who have local respect

Relation of funding to control: for example, government funding compared with NGOs obtaining grants

Women and literacy: how to get women in if they are not used to participating; what is the effect on the community once women are in?

Strategies have to be developed to deal with resistance from men.

Diversity: no one right system. But there are 5 key items involved in setting up a programme:

- money (and the need to maximise resources)
- understanding (of the participants and their situation)
- institutional flexibility
- the role of the facilitator - local motivation

WORKSHOP D

TEACHING AND LEARNING

IDEOLOGY AND CURRICULUM

Juliet McCaffrey, Lambeth Adult Education Institute

"Our experience points to a symbiotic relationship between illiteracy and the marginalization of people, be it social economic or political"
Lalitas Ramadas, *Viewpoints* No 9 1989 ALBSU

"An essential consideration is... whether educational projects are designed to bring about an improvement in people's material conditions within the context of an existing socio-olitical system i.e. social reform, or whether they are designed to facilitate the ultimate transformation of that system i.e. social change.
"National Literacy Co-operation: Guiding Principles Document, NECC, Republic of South Africa 1990

I want to explore the relationship between ideology, curriculum and methodology in literacy programmes and in the dominant socio-cultural context. What frameworks do we personally espouse? In what ways are the curricula and methodologies we use affected by the dominant socio-economic context? Are our own attitudes reflected in our objectives and in the teaching learning situations we create?

In a pluralistic society such as Britain, working in a marginalized, non-statutory and under-funded area, the relationship between our daily classroom practice and the underlying assumptions behind that practice can often be overlooked. The theoretical base for our work has been slow to develop and even slower to reach the vast majority of our practitioners.

"the substantive data on literacy practice... ranges from medieval England to contemporary Africa and Asia... but pays little attention to what is happening right now in the U.K."

"those producing theories and ideas... have... been operating at a remove institutionally and conceptually and in terms of their empirical interest, even from workers in the field" (Street, B V 1984)

Many practitioners are unaware of the small body of research into literacy practice in the U.K. and therefore have little access to the debate.

The relationship between powerlessness, marginalisation and illiteracy in both the non-industrialised and the industrialised world negates any argument that literacy teaching is a neutral non-political activity. While this is very clear to those currently planning literacy provision for a free post-apartheid South Africa, it is less obvious to those involved in literacy practice in this country (though Mace 1984 has recorded two incidents of political interference). Street's (1984) concept of "ideological" and "autonomous" literacy and his rejection of "autonomy" or neutrality in literacy work have considerably advanced the debate here. Literacy he and others have argued is related in time and space to the situation in which it takes place both at the macro and micro level. Curriculum does not emerge, it is determined by rationale choice, by omission as well as selection. An understanding of the way in which the dominant socio-political context and the paradigms in which we ourselves operate and which determine this selection and omission is crucial to our work as teachers and organizers.

During the early stages of the U K literacy

campaign in the 1970s, there was no attempt to systematise and introduce a reading curriculum, though this was common in other countries including Israel and the U.S.A. The British literacy movement followed instead the pluralistic, non-centralized tradition of the general education system, and each geographical unit from local education authority to individual institution and small voluntary centre was left to develop its own methods unhindered by the availability of teaching resources. These were disseminated across the country by the central literacy unit ALRA (later ALU and latterly ALBSU) through a range of conferences, training seminars and publishing activities. Questions regarding the political and ideological nature of literacy practice were largely not addressed, though Mace (1975, 1979) was seminal in placing literacy in a political context.

The development of literacy work in the U.K. is an example of an initiative developed and maintained at a structural level which the system cannot support financially or administratively owing to what Thompson (1980) terms the "missionary zeal" of the workers. This has left participants little time to develop a conceptual framework: energy has been concentrated on how to teach x or how to train y to teach x. However the conceptual framework whether implicit or explicit determines the organization, structure, staffing and the learning and teaching.

Literacy programmes in the 1970s largely developed a student-centred informal approach without the constraints of testing student progress or the demands of quantitative evaluation. If asked, students would be able to describe progress in terms of reading and writing tasks they could do, how they felt about themselves, how they related to other people, whether their employment situation had improved and how they felt about their own abilities - in other words in terms of enactive achievement, effective personal achievement, affective social achievement, socio-economic achievement and cognitive achievement (Charnley and Jones 1979). Reading levels might be commonly described as beginning, middle and advanced, the last referring to students who can read perfectly but have considerable difficulty with spelling. This model of diagnosis far removed from the battery of psychometric tests used by educational sociologists in the remedial reading context of schooling was to some extent codified by Martin Good (1984) and is under attack in the present political climate. Nevertheless although there may be considerable modification, as Daryn Holland's ALBSU-funded assessment project (1989) shows, the emphasis is still on codifying qualitative rather than quantitative assessment.

This liberal humanist approach which adopted the broader concept of literacy as expressed in the Persepolis declaration (1975) led to an openness to student demands for further learning and the development of learning opportunities such as Second Chance, Return to Learning, Fresh Start and Access to Higher Education programmes. The refusal by tutors to categorise as unintelligent and limited people who

aftereleven years of compulsory schooling were unable to read and write adequately for the demands of the industrial society, enabled those people to develop their intellectual and creative abilities despite limited technical reading and writing skills. The breadth and quality of literacy student writing, both published and unpublished, has been a major contribution to the literacy curriculum and methodology. *Write First Time,* a national newspaper of student writing published by a voluntary student and tutor collective and funded by the Central Literacy Unit from 1975 to 1985, provided a national student voice and negated any suggestion of limited intellectual abilities in those with reading and writing difficulties.

The student writing movement also contributed to the development of student-centred and student-negotiated learning, student control of text and therefore curriculum. Student-centred refers to both the content through and around which learning takes place and the way in which the content is taught and learned. The content is based on and utilizes the student's life experiences as the base and the medium for learning.

The language experience approach used in Britain by beginning readers demonstrates this very clearly. The tutor or facilitator holds a conversation with an individual student or a group of students from which by mutual agreement a couple of sentences are selected. The following is an example:

"My name is Harry.
I work for the Council.
I work in the Highways Department.
I resurface roadsand paint in the yellow lines
The wages are not very good".

Harry's job and his articulation of this form the curriculum content of the session through which Harry and his colleagues in the literacy group learn sight vocabulary, sounds and syllables. There will also be a discussion on the level of Harry's wages, the council and the Highways Department.

Student concerns, student's lives, problems and histories were set alongside the functional tasks of filling in applicationforms, reading the *T.V. Times* and the local newspaper. Student-produced texts and topic work around such issues as health, housing, hobbies, elections, trade union rights, to name only a few of the subjects developed up and down the country by individual schemes, are another component in the curriculum. An example of this might be the current debate around the Poll Tax (Community Charge) being imposed by the Conservative Government. Control of the curriculum by selection or omission is very apparent in this issue. At Lambeth Adult Education Institute, the subject was raised by a student in response to a news item. This led to a discussion on the difference between the present system of rates, a household charge and the Poll Tax, a charge on individuals which severely affects large families on lower incomes in poor housing. Research by the House of Commons Library demonstrated that 26 million people (73% of all adults in England and Wales) will pay more while only 9.5 million people will gain. *(Guardian 2.4.90)* In the next session a student brought in a leaflet on exemptions

from and reductions in payment. The leaflet also contained telephone numbers for advice and assistance.

The approach is loosely based on Freire's ideas of problematisation and conscientisation. The approach also lends itself to adaptation for particular contexts. The materials are quickly and easily produced. In Lambeth as in many other literacy schemes the photocopier has taken the place of chalk and talk; a newspaper picture can be used in a group and student text can be written on the board or on a large piece of paper and pinned up or reproduced very easily with a duplicator or if that is unavailable, a hectograph. The flexibility of the materials and their transient nature have many advantages. As the Poll Tax has consistently hit the headlines, it is likely that all groups wherever based will have heard reports and will wish to gain more knowledge. Thus this could be used with a group of people with severe learning difficulties probably with reference to what they saw on television. The text in this case might be

> "Last night I saw pictures of riots on the television.Shop windows were broken
> People don't like the new tax
> Some people will have to pay more money after April"

An ALBSU-funded local development project to establish literacy provision where existing provision was unable to meet the demand from several groups under the auspices of the Social Service Department showed clearly the subtle adaptations in the curriculum that were necessary in four different contexts - a centre for homeless people, a family centre for parents deemed in need of improving parenting skills, centres for people under severe emotional stress (mental health day care centres) and for those with severe learning difficulties (day centres for mentally handicapped people). Student texts were produced and topics discussed in the same way as described above but with an orientation determined by the group itself. For example,creative writing was popular in the groups for the homeless and people under stress, practical writing was favoured by parents, and current events by those with severe learning difficulties. The flexibility of the materials enabled these differences to be responded to. The evaluation illustrates how people in the different contexts gained particular benefits from attending a literacy group (Project Report to ALBSU, forthcoming)

Some important questions need to be raised about this approach. Control of the curriculum through the control of the text and the subject gives people control over their own learning. An understanding of issues assists a critical analysis of the world around them which may assist in the process of changing and shaping that world. Does it however constitute a basic education curriculum or is the content arbitrary and unrelated? Does it provide a body of knowledge which leads to a greater understanding of the forces shaping society? While it does address dialect, non-standard English and linguistic variation, how does it give access to the body of knowledge formed and controlled by the dominant cultural forces? Does student-centred negotiated and participative learning provide students

with sufficient tools for intellectual understanding and critical analysis? What evidence is there to suggest it develops an understanding of society, the situation and ability to take greater control over their own lives? Can a curriculum which develops these skills and engenders empowerment be delivered through a student-centred and negotiated approach such as described above? How does this approach which aims at empowering relate to literacy programmes in the context of revolutionary or rapid social transformation such as those in Cuba and Nicaragua and the programme designed by SWAPO for post-independence Namibia? How do they provide for varied contexts? Is the curriculum centrally prescribed and how are the purposes of the people incorporated?

The current situation in Britain is producing a sustained attack on this participative, humanist model of literacy work in parallel with the attack on liberal education and the centralization of the school curriculum. Training has entered the vocabulary of higher education. It now dominates further, basic and continuing education. The Government exerts increasing control over the curriculum both by dictate and through the dispersal of financial support from the Department of Employment.

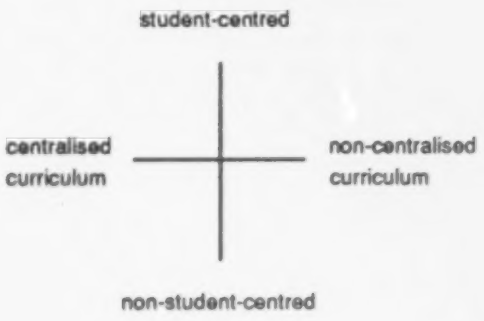
The drastic rise in unemployment to over three million (Department of Employment figures) and higher gave a new impetus to basic education and a recognition of the importance of adequate literacy skills. The inception of the RESTART programme run by the Department of Employment through the Manpower Services Commission, in which all unemployed people were interviewed prior to being offered vocational training, revealed an inadequacy regarding operational literacy by 25 - 30% of those interviewed.

Research by the University of Lancaster corroborates this. A survey revealed that 10% of those interviewed identified difficulties with reading, writing and arithmetic. A further 4.5% expressed difficulty with arithmetic and numeracy alone. The guesstimate of 2 million in the early 1970's has been radically revised upwards. The Department of Employment through the Manpower Services Commission and the more recent Employment Training Scheme has invested comparatively large sums of money in basic education for unemployed people. In 1985 80% of the budget of the Friends Centre in Brighton, an adult education centre in the voluntary sector, was derived from the Department of Employment to run a variety of training programmes.

The model of literacy as described above was severely affected by this financial dependency and the control of the curriculum this entailed. It is important that educators in this situation analyze their situation. Adaptation to the demands of those in power controlling production and the labour market may be deemed necessary, but what is the cost paid in terms of educational goals. Can students be genuinely empowered in such a situation or must the programmes become channeled into employability linked to economic priorities - a labour force better skilled, more mobile, more adaptable and

more open to change?

The curriculum content reflects this political context. Reading texts are work-related, vocabulary and spelling are trade specific. Filling in application forms, writing a *curriculum vitae* and practising interview techniques are essential elements of the curriculum and increasingly demanded by students themselves. Thus the division between the curriculum laid down by the Department of Employment with the objective of teaching reading, writing and communication skills and the personal presentation skills necessary for employment and a model of studen-centred and negotiated learning is not as evident as at first might appear. An axis of controlled/non-controlled curriculum and student centred/non-student-centred would not necessarily place Department of Employment programmes at an opposite pole to programmes which might be described as participative and liberal:



Where would other models of provision be placed on this matrix and how would individual schemes place themselves? The model also needs to be superimposed on a model of change such as the Burrell and Morgan model of the sociology of radical change on a horizontal axis of radical change/regulation and vertical axis of subjective/objective, which introduce structural and human parameters underlying the frame of reference in which the literacy provision and the individual tutor or facilitator operate.

An improvement in living standards in the form of job or promotion is a laudable aim. If this is achieved with a critical understanding of the basis of production and the ebb and flow of the labour market in a capitalist society, this might be called education. If it is simply training in the skills required by the potential employer, it contributes to the maintenance of the international capitalist economy. It is important to remember that those with literacy difficulties are everywhere marginalisedand without power, and that education contributes either to the maintenance or the transformation of society.

APPROPRIATE MATERIALS AND METHOD IN LITERACY TEACHING

L. S. Saraswathi, Madras

Practitioners To Look At Themselves

Appropriateness or otherwise of materials and methods in literacy teaching depends upon the programme focus, which could be people orientated or target orientated. This, in turn, depends upon a) the practitioners' (programme providers') concept of literacy, their ideological base; b) on the perception of their own role and the role of the people in the programme which they possess, and c) on their understanding and practising the process of teaching and learning.

Concept of Literacy/ Ideological Base

The concepts of literacy (presented in the literature available and as reflected in the practices observed) vary widely from seeing it as a mere technical skill to be acquired by people as a pre-requisite for their growth and development to seeing it as a means of empowering people, in using one's own language for gaining power to take control over one's life situations. In other words it varies from literacy being the goal or an end in itself to literacy being a tool to gain power to have control over situations that affect their lives.

In practice, it may or may not be as clear cut as it is presented. The issue is one of clarity of practitioners' own concept of literacy and its importance and relevance for the learners. Literacy practitioners need to examine their concept of literacy. The deeper issue is one's own attitude to people and relevance of literacy form(s) useful to people, and in essence, it is an issue of structure of social organization.

In general, the literacy scene today appears to be focussing on the importance of the acquisition of the technical skills of the three Rs; the presentation of a grim picture of the staggering number of people categorised as illiterates who are in need of such skill; the promotion of literacy programmes for the achievement of targets within a limited time frame; equalising the skill acquisition with people's development; dividing the oral and literate cultures, where there is only a overlap, and making out the division to be one of grave concern. Each one of these and combinations of these and all these can affect the concept of literacy the practitioners have. These could take them back and forth in terms of the Technical skill acquisition - Empowerment continuum, probably tilting the balance towards the technical skill acquisition end of the continuum. The complexity of the scene presented only reaffirms the need for the practitioners to examine one's stand with reference to literacy and to clarify for oneself the process,the place and timing of literacy programmes to serve as an empowering process.

Roles of Practitioners and Learners in Learning Situations.

In tune with the practitioners' concept of literacy, their perceptions of their own roles in learning situations vary. When literacy is a technical skill to be imparted by the teacher and acquired by the learner, the situation becomes hierarchical. The relationship between the teacher and the learner is one of master

and servant. The teacher knows and the learner does not know. The teacher imparts the skill and the learner acquires the skill. The role perceptions of the teacher and the learner are that of superior and inferior, the benefactor and the beneficiary.

Whereas when literacy is the tool of empowerment, the situation is non-hierarchical and egalitarian. The relationship between the teacher and learner is that of partner or co-learner with mutual respect. Both have their life experiences to share together and analyze to understand the situation, take decisions for actions and work toward achieving certain common collective goals. Social problems get focussed. The causes of the problem analyzed bring to the fore the structural inequality and the resulting powerlessness. It probably becomes more evident that a small minority has leased civilization for itself and discriminates against all those who do not do as it wishes. Examples are many. The literates rule over illiterates, the men over women, the rich over poor and so on. But in literacy seen as empowerment, the role perceptions of the teacher and the learner are that of equal partners/ colleagues. The teacher plays the role of support to the learners in things they like to pursue on their own and promoter of critical analysis.

Given the literacy scene today, the role perceptions may vary with practitioners in different programmes, with different practitioners in the same programme, and with the same practitioner at different times. Hence it becomes imperative that the practitioners examine themselves for their own perceptions of the roles they assume and its effects on the learners and their development.

The issue here is the clarity and understanding one has about one's role and recognising the scope for widening the perception. Equipping oneself to play the role in terms of internalising the attitudes and skills required becomes imminent. This would mean "being alert" and conscious about one's attitudes towards the learners and the learning situation.

Understanding and Practising the Processes of Teaching and Learning.

With variations in the perceptions of the practitioners regarding the roles of the teacher and learner in the learning situation, their understanding of the processes of teaching and learning would vary. Understanding the processes of teaching and learning would mean understanding the processes underlying several different aspects of literacy/development programmes. These underlying processes are:

1. Structuring of the group of learners: In the formal hierarchical situation, where the teacher is the benefactor, the groups of learners are generally varied in size, homogeneous in some ways and probably heterogeneous in many ways. It does not seem to matter in this situation as the stress is generally on individual development, sometimes even at the expense of group cohesiveness and functioning. In the non-formal, non-

hierarchical situation where the teacher is a partner and co-learner, the structuring of the group as a process gains

importance as the group solidarity and the group functioning together are stressed over the individual. It is important that the group should be small, comprised of members from common backgrounds with similar interests with a sense of identity and pride. The individual within the group is important for understanding oneself in order to relate with others in the group.

2. Arranging the Place and Scheduling of the Programmes.
In formal situations, the place and the time of classes are fixed by the authorities/teachers. The scheduling is generally inflexible. In literacy programmes that are empowering/ participatory, the learners along with the facilitators decide on the place of informal meetings and the timings of such meetings.They are generally flexible.

3. Assessment of Needs:
In programmes where the literacy is taken as the technical skill to be acquired, the need is identified by the programme providers. In programmes facilitating empowerment of people, the needs are identified as and when they arise out of the real life problems and interests of learners through a dialogical process among the members of a group of learners and/or between the learners and facilitators. Need identification is an on-going process. Learners' recognition of their own needs is basic.

4. Development of the Curriculum.
In programmes of literacy preceding development, the curriculum is pre-set by the programme providers. The objectives are set by the teachers or curriculum planners. There is not much scope for change. It is rather closed from the point of view of the teachers as well as the learners. The specific objectives of each lesson and detailed lesson plans are worked out before the programme begins. The learner has no role to play in this process. He/she has no control over the lessons. The learner is a passive recipient of something considered to be good for him/her by the practitioners who generally are considered knowledgeables. In participatory programmes, the development of curriculum is on-going, emergent and open ended. General objectives are decided by the learners and the teacher in the beginning. But the specific objectives and the lesson plans are developed from one session to the next. The subject matter consists of analysis of problems of the learner in the village situations. Based on this analysis, the learners determine what they want to learn and also identify the resources needed with the help of the teacher. Thus the content includes two areas, namely, process related to group problem solving and content related to the information, skills or community action projects which the learners themselves decide to pursue. The learner has an active role to play in the whole process. The curriculum in this type of programme is under the control of the learners. It is flexible and can be changed according to the changing needs.

5. Preparation of Materials:
In the case of traditional literacy programmes, materials or aids to learning the three Rs are pre-packaged, developed by some language teaching expert who knows how a particular language should be learned. It is generally published. It is limited in scope. Individual learners are required to do the exercises given with each lesson to improve their skills in reading and writing. It may or may not encourage interaction among the learners. The teacher guides the learners lesson by lesson.

In the case of participatory programmes, the materials are not generally pre-packaged. They are developed by the teacher/facilitator and/or learners as a means to stimulate problem identification/analysis, promote self-expression and support group activities. Stimulation exercises and experiential learning exercises which are open ended and which promote interaction are used.

The materials available and used in oral culture by the villagers to communicate concepts in the process of socialization are identified and used at relevant points by the participants, both teachers and learners. The oral culture is rich with songs, games, proverbs, riddles, stories which are part of the social milieu. They have the potential to be used as learning/teaching materials.The teachers and learners may jointly come out with suggestions for development of materials and involve themselves in the preparation of the same. Here again the learners are active. They have opportunities to discover their own abilities and their relevance in analyzing the problem situations working towards solutions collec*tively.*

6. Choice and Use of Methods:
Traditional literacy programmes often use lectures, drill exercises directed towards individual skill development. In participatory programmes, small group discussions, small group activities (such as role plays, story sessions, playing games, organising functions) project planning and implementation, sessions for developing communication, discussion, problem analysis, taking decisions and such other needed skills are predominant. These methods promote group development, the group members function together as a group. The group has control over itself, in the sense that it could function as an autonomous body. Dialogue is the underlying process. Here again the learner is extremely active.

7. Evaluation:
In the traditional literacy programmes, the system through the teacher assesses and informs the learner as to how much he/she knows. This is limited to subject matter or technical skill learning.

In the flexible process-orientated non-formal programmes, learning is difficult to identify and describe. The learner assumes responsibilities for assessing his/her own learning, evaluate it or be able to articulate it. Learners are evaluators in collaboration with the facilitator. Simple tools are used which the learners themselves can apply. The learners and teachers are jointly responsible for failures and successes. Learners are not blamed for their non-learning. It is only seen as a

situation which requires some more analysis and attention.

There is a fundamental difference in the two approaches described under each of the processes of education mentioned above. "Literacy is understood as a remedial programme designed and delivered by zealous missionaries for those who are in need" in the case of purely technical skill acquisition programmes. It is a passive, receptive and conditioning process. Whereasúù it is understood as an "outcome of learner involvement in shaping their own learning within the context of reshaping the social, economic, political and cultural environment within which they live" in the case of programmes of empowerment. Here the promotion of participation and direction by learners result in openness in learners. This can become the first step towards the larger, more socially and economically inclusive change that will provide a basis on which universal literacy can be realised. This is empowerment. It is an evolutionary process, a process of discovery or a liberating process. Here the act of teaching cannot be separated from the act of learning, nor the act of educating from the act of being educated.

There is a mix of passive and active, receptive and discovery, conditioning and liberating processes in any learning situation. The activities carried out may enhance or inhibit one or the other depending upon how they are approached. The practitioners' tilt is to be constantly looked at. The issue here is one of practitioners' consistency in approach throughout the programme and also his/her clarity in understanding the results, namely, the learners' involvement in and control over the learning situation and their relationship to one's own attitudes and values. This is an area where there is a lot of self-searching that needs to be done on the part of the practitioners.

Training of the Practitioners.

The presentation regarding the appropriate materials and methods in literacy teaching in the preceding pages point towards the specific attitudes and skills that are required on the part of the practitioners to see and use literacy as a means of empowering people. This is an evolutionary process to be experienced not only by the learners but also by the teachers/facilitators/practitioners. In the present day world, literacy is regarded more as a technical skill than as a means of empowering people. Under the compulsions within the context, it is difficult to develop the attitudes and skills necessary unless special concerted efforts are made in training the practitioners.

Beginning with Paulo Freire, the efforts in this direction are many and varied. Experiences of trainers, as reported in the literature, seem to reiterate the strength of such an approach in empowering people.

My own efforts in practising participatory approach and working toward empowering people have been in terms of

a) Curriculum planning with the villagers for a programme of adult education through organizing a village camp and applying the approach in a project area

with 100 Adult Education Centres through training and follow-up of animators or adult education teachers.

b) Planning for post-literacy material preparation with neo-literates from a cluster of villages through organizing a village camp.

c) Developing a methodology for teaching numeracy for adults through studying the practices of the villagers in counting and measuring in day to day life and their own modes of communication concepts of numeracy in the process of socialization

d) Developing a trainers' manual *(Towards Shared Learning)* of participatory training for trainers of animators or adult education teachers in non-formal adult education

e) Organizing awareness camps for rural women's groups and/or field functionaries working with women in general and in some specific areas such as health

Some Observations and Suggestions

Based on my field experiences I have the following observations and suggestions to the practitioners.

1. The participatory approach is useful in motivating the learners and bringing about some degree of learner empowerment, namely, a sense of confidence in themselves seen in talking, raising questions and volunteering to take responsibilities and so on; a team spirit reflected in group functioning; an inner strength or power to resist threats to the efforts from outside the programme. It is evident that these come out of the learners/trainees spontaneously when they are central to the programme.

2. The teachers/facilitators should be carefully selected and trained. It is preferable that the teachers are from the same community as learners and they should be receptive to the idea of helping people to do things themselves.

3. Training should help the teachers/facilitators to develop new understandings with regard to faith in people's potential in solving their own problems and that learning is a social and personal experience in terms of sharing one's experiences with others and reflecting on one's own personal experiences. Constant reflections on the actions is a must during the training.

4. What is true of the training group is true of the community and society at large. This is to be experienced and recognised by the trainees.

5. Continuous field support and in©service training should be ensured when the teachers are in their education centres. Field support and in-service training should continue to help the animators/teachers to deepen their understanding of the educational process of empowering through practices in analyzing experiences of learners and also that of themselves; in looking at their own attitudes and values and relating these to the results attained in the centre. The Inspirers/Supervisors should also be given pre-service and in-service training and also field support on these lines for

specified periods of time.

6. Training for empowering is initially time consuming and demanding and also quite exciting. There are many efforts in this direction which have been shown to be rewarding. The responsibility of the professional adult educators is to work out modes of operationalising the same for the benefit of the people. Strengthening institutional capability to undertake this responsibility requires immediate attention.

7. The trainers play a crucial role in this approach to literacy or education. It is necessary to build up a team of good trainers in this approach as at present the trainers are not available in sufficient number. The team could be built area-wise. Organising a network of such trainers could be useful in identifying issues, clarifying problems and working towards solutions through sharing of experiences in this regard.

8. Programmatic deficiencies such as inadequacies in the teachers/facilitators' own strength regarding their basic beliefs or faith in people and their potential in solving their own problems (somewhat shaky value system in the teachers/facilitators), insufficient acquisition of skills in problem analysis/reflection, unrealistic/idealistic situation depiction in the content of the teaching learning materials, in the content of methods used (e.g. themes of the role plays), non -recognition of the wisdom of the learners and of the community as a whole, non-participatory evaluation criteria when the programme is participatory are to be carefully dealt with. It is not uncommon to find these in the present scene in literacy or non-formal education or training programmes for these. These de-emphasize the people-focus and can lead to loss of faith in the approach itself. The remedy lies in identifying and accepting the problem without resorting to rationalization. There cannot be any compromise at any level.

9. Non-formal education as an empowering process works only in flexible organizational contexts. The administrators should have some committment towards the approach. The supportive organizational climate can be described as that which allows the teachers to experiment with a right to succeed or fail, to take decisions regarding their own work, to be open in discussion of the real situation and sharing their opinions on vital issues. It is often seen in the field organizations which show flexibility in their programmes with people are not that flexible within the administrative set up of the organization itself. This creates conflict within the field personnel and affects their work with people.

10. Empowering is enhanced or inhibited in terms of the commitments of the political settings to equitable sharing of power and resources. The vested interests oppose the process at all levels. It is not uncommon to find the budgetary and programme provisions not in tune with the demands of the poor people.

11. Cultural and religious beliefs may promote peace which is advocated as non-confrontation. These beliefs in the community are not conductive to any

structural change or change in power relations. Education as an empowering process has to take note of that, examine the cultural religious contexts in depth and work towards change through critical analysis of the real life situations.

12. The oral culture of the people have certain strengths in that the people are close to nature and the knowledge they have acquired is experiential, in the sense that it is internalised through experience. Their modes of learning such as songs, games, riddles, proverbs, celebrations through organising dramas and other art forms, living with artisans going through intricate experiences of creating whatever they create, all these have in them an in-built system of involving the learners in whatever they are doing. All their senses are put into action. Mostly the situation in which it takes place is a group situation. They seem to have a collective sense of preserving what they receive and produced. They reflect the practical wisdom of the group. They appear to possess their own ways of sharing the wisdom. The teachers/facilitators/trainers ought to respect these modes. In the process of helping the society to be literate, these spontaneous natural processes of learning cannot and should not be destroyed. The recognition of the power of the spoken word by the educators is at the root of helping them use their own language to gain power to take control over situations that affect their lives.

WORKSHOP D: TEACHING AND LEARNING

Participants were given the attached questionnaire and the answers formed the basis of extended discussion. They were asked what kind of literacy/education programme they had experienced and what kind of literacy/education programme they would like.

QUESTIONNAIRE Part I: "WHAT IS": the kind of education/literacy programmes which we go through.

I understand the education and/or literacy programme I went through/I am familiar with as one in which

1. Accessibility to facilities of education/literacy programmes is....(difficult)
2. Educational programme/curriculum is based on ....(NFE)
3. Educational programme/curriculum is designed by...(tutors and students collaborate)
4. Educational programme/curriculum focuses in general on...(confidence-building)
5. The materials required are developed generally by....(tutors using student work)
6. The materials, in general, carry images of people who are ... (agents in their own development)
7. The produced materials generally promote...(self-confidence)
8. General approach to teaching and learning is....(personal)
9. The process of teaching and learning is....(interactive)
10. The relationship between the teacher and the learner is one of....(a) the teacher is seen as....(facilitator)(b) the learner is seen as ....(learning to learn)
11. The role of the culture of the people in the process of education/literacy is....(referred to but not central)
12. In education situations, (a) individual development is....(paramount) (b) group development....(sustains individual development)
13. The responsibility for assessing learning rests with....(teacher/student combined)
14. The learners are taught that their future is...(positive)

Part II: "WHAT SHOULD BE": Envisioning the kind of education/ literacy programme we would like:

If I were establishing the values of an education/literacy programme, it would be one in which

1. Accessibility to facilities of education/literacy programme is....(easy)
2. Educational programme/curriculum is based on....(NFE)
3. Educational programme/curriculum is designed by....(students and tutors)
4. Educational programme/curriculum focuses, in general on....(student potential)
5. The materials required are developed generally by....(students and tutors)

6. The materials, in general, carry images of people/society that is....(as agents in their own development)
7. The produced materials generally promote...(self development learning)
8. General approach to learning and learning is...(personal)
9. The process of teaching and learning is...(interactive)
10. The relationship between teacher and the learner is one of...(a) The teacher is seen as....(supportive)(b) The learner is seen as....(participating)
11. The role of the culture of the people in the process education/literacy is...(as a basis for further learning)
12. In educational situations,(a) individual development is....(the key to learning)(b) group development is...(important for individual learning)
13. The responsibility for assessing learning rests with....(tutors/students combined)
14. The learners are taught that their future....(has potential for growth and development)

John Ryan (UNESCO) and Edwin Townsend Coles review world literacy problems.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

It's easy to idealise the programme you actually get involved in - is it really as good as you claim? Is the image we promote the true one?

The feeling in the UK is that ABE provision has evolved - we should be at the stage where the issues are student-centred but are we at that stage?

Problem of negotiation in unequal structures - inevitably the situation is one of unequal power. The conditions dictate this. Consultation and negotiation are seen in different ways - consultation at national/local level or within classroom setting. Constraints will be present. We need to initiate a process which creates a climate for negotiation and which leads on to interactive processes which lead to power or control over this process.

There was discussion around the question: "Students are taught what their future is .." 'Taught' was felt to be a one-way process by UK workers. In India students are taught that the future is their responsibility.

Motivation is the key factor.

Skills assessment is not always the answer to determining what educational access an adult should have. Literacy is not always triggered by vocational opportunities. To raise aspirations as a matter of course may not be in their interest. In many countries, campaigns have stressed that the future will be better - a rallying call.

Changes are needed - governments do not always create the best conditions for literacy campaigns eg. by timing classes around the agricultural year etc.

If it is not good for the state, it will not be taught. Literacy can create economic and political problems.

Someone at international level pronounces on ILY 1990 and all heads of state have to commit themselves to make hypocritical statements about 100% eradication of illiteracy. Support for anti-illiteracy campaigns is often tied to foreign aid.

It is to the government's advantage to retain illiteracy, which means that people do not understand their rights etc. so the political process is perpetuated.

Are we aiming at individual development or group development? Individual development is a western concept; the concept of group work is more important in many developing countries. Individual development has political implications - a few succeed and become the new educated class. Group development is important-especially in homogeneous groups who are working towards a common task. In developing countries education is a group process and moves forward together. Individual development can be facilitated within a group. The objective is to achieve as much as you can for everybody. The stress on the individual can be dangerous.

What is the relationship between curricula, methodologies and dominant social and political context? Do we understand that relationship and how is it reflected in our

work?

Demonstration of language experience approaches: using student's own language and developing literacy to create texts that provide resources for reading and discussion eg. 20 personal texts.

Illustration of topic-based work - i.e. issues raised by students: example was Poll Tax and pictures of riots. Some of the great campaigns in which literacy was part were of a major social transformation eg Nicaragua and Cuba, using a centrally determined issue with a picture as focus.

UK people felt student-created texts gave control and related to students: was this real or an illusion of control, empowerment? did it provide a proper framework; much of it was individually based: a western concept? community practice is dynamic and needs to be brought out from the beginning.

Choice of material: even where negotiated with the student (either an individual class or mass consultations as in Nicaragua), it involves selection and omission of material and individual political choices.

Negotiation with students and student control of learning can also happen within narrow vocational skills based programme.

As tutor/organizers we should be aware of the effect of the choices we make. Problem of raising false hopes regarding literacy? eg teacher view imposed

Governments do not always create best conditions for a literacy programme: eg timing of classes. Does literacy create unwelcome questioning of governments? and of male dominance?- men often feel challenged by women taking up literacy

Where learners tease a learning text from each other, this creates the dynamics of real situations

There are many pulls on animator: "expert" in eliciting/reflect community itself; teaching methods: photos on board, slogans, discussions; story-telling, folk drama, puppets, critical songs. Facilitators to be helped change from traditional methods - by modelling successful practice.

IV

CONCLUSION

AFTERWORD

Dr L.S.Saraswathi, one of the workshop leaders and a well known literacy organizer and teacher in India, writes the following comments on her participation in the workshops:

In the workshops I was struck by the importance given to

* the people in the programme- the illiterate adults, their voices

* the practitioners in the field and their experience and the theorists who have had practical experiences in the field

There was a clear emphasis on the process in the organization of the workshop. The general feeling I have about the workshop is that it helped the participants to recognise the complexity of the reality in terms of understanding the context, the literacy programme organization and literacy teaching and learning. The workshop underlined the people-focussed programmes. A number of issues related to the concept of literacy, the organization of programmes and teaching and learning literacy were raised which were useful in recognising the complexity of the situation as well as the responsibility of the organizers in understanding the people in the programme and their perceptions of literacy. I personally felt strengthened in my beliefs and practices and I feel the need to work with more vigour on the participatory methods of teaching and learning. In other words, it is working more intensely towards evolving methods which would help in the process of enabling people in development. The visuals and the materials provided at the workshops were useful in obtaining a comprehensive view of the thinking and practices in the field of adult education/literacy. On the whole I felt happy to be part of the workshop.

COMMENT:

by Seminar Co-ordinator and Organiser

Anyone reading over the lists of themes and the reports of the workshops to the plenary sessions cannot help but be struck by the strong and consistent commitment to local needs and empowerment evident in these approaches to literacy. The repetition of themes is partly a product of the self-selection mechanism by which people chose to come to a seminar like this in the first place; partly because of the way in which it was set up with strong emphasis in early sessions on political and ideological aspects of literacy; and partly because of the dynamic of the situation itself, in which the exchange of wide varieties of experience and knowledge made it apparent that literacy practices vary from context to context and that they are always imbued with power relations.

Whilst the title of the seminar clearly signalled People, Language and Power, the participants themselves strongly pushed discussion in the direction of concern for local viewpoints, interests and needs: resistance to "top down" programmes is, it seems, endemic at least amongst literacy activists of this kind.

The notion of negotiation; of waiting on local initiative and demand; of understanding the socio-political situation and locality within which a programme is to be set; of choosing animators according to their local status and respect rather than by external and perhaps over-academic criteria; of suspicion of central governments and their motivations-control, functional job disciplines etc.- and a preference for NGOs independently funded and directly responsive to local needs; all of these constitute the dominant ideology of the new generation of literacy practitioners, a view shared by many theorists and some policy makers. This represents a significant shift from previous views of literacy in the post-war era that were more ethnocentric, top-down, academic in the narrow sense, technicist, centralist and government-based.

It would be interesting to compare the account of this ILY 1990 Seminar with those of earlier periods, and this report itself will provide a fascinating historical document for future researchers and practitioners as an insight into how literacy was viewed by this kind of audience at this point of time. It remains to be seen how far the ideas and change of direction signalled here feed into actual practice and into policy making in the next decade. We hope that the experience of this seminar and the wide publication of this report will be a factor in facilitating such change.

Brian V. Street
Alan Rogers

Summer 1990

SPEAKERS AND WORKSHOP LEADERS

Seminar Organizer:

Professor Alan Rogers, Director of Education for Development, author of *Teaching Adults, Adults Learning for Development* and other writings; has worked in India, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka etc; Visiting Professor, Univisity of Reading, Bulmershe Court, Earley, Reading RG6 1HY.

Seminar Co-Ordinator:

Dr Brian V Street, Senior Lecturer in Social Anthropology, University of Sussex, Falmer, Brighton; author of *Literacy in Theory and Practice, Cross-Cultural Approaches to Literacy, Literacy Research in the U K* (ed with J McCaffery), *Cultural Meanings of Literacy;* experience of literacy in the Middle East.

Keynote Speaker:

Manzoor Ahmed, UNICEF Representative, Beijing, China

Plenary Speakers:

Dr David Barton, Department of Linguistics, University of Lancaster, Bailrigg, Lancaster; founder-organiser of *RAPAL* (Research and Practice in Adult Literacy), literacy researcher, co-editor of *Writing in the Community.*

John Ryan, Co-ordinator, ILY Secretariat, UNESCO, 7 Place de Fontenoy, 75700 Paris, France

Workshop leaders:

Dr David Alexander, Senior Lecturer in Adult Education, University of Edinburgh; adult education work in Zambia, Swaziland, Thailand; workers' education and agricultural extension.* Didacus Jules, Director of Folk Research Centre, St Lucia; member of ILY International Task Force.

Juliet McCaffery, Secretary,British Association for Literacy in Development (BALID); co-editor, Literacy Research in the U K , literacy tutor and organiser in the U K

Juliet Millican, formerly organiser, literacy project, Senegal; adult literacy tutor, U K

Moitraye Mukhapadyaya, School of African and Asian Studies, University of Sussex; development activist in India, rural primary health care, Nonformal Education for landless labourers, urban children; *Silver Shackles- women and development in India.*

Dr L S Saraswathi, worker in literacy, health and women's programmes, Madras; author of Functional Approach to Women's Literacy and other studies.

Dr David Stephens, Education School, University of Sussex; experience in evaluating education programmes in developing countries; co-editor *Doing Educational Research in Developing Countries.*

Edwin Townsend Coles, Oxford; worker for thirty years in Nonformal Education, mostly Africa and India; responsible for setting up National Literacy Programme in Botswana; author of *Let the People Think* and other works.

Dona Williams, Scottish Community Education Council; adult education organiser, treasurer of BALID.

LITERACY IN DEVELOPMENT:
PEOPLE, LANGUAGE AND POWER

Edited: Dr Brian V Street, University of Sussex

This report of the international seminar organized in April 1990 by **Education for Development** and the**Commonwealth Institute** as part of the U K activities for International Literacy Year 1990 includes some of the papers presented to the seminar and the reports from the working groups. Two of the key-note addresses, by Manzoor Ahmed UNICEF Representative in China, and by Lalage Bown, Professor of Adult and Continuing Education in the University of Glasgow, are reproduced here. The working papers and discussions relate to four main issues: * the relationship of non-formal education and development, definitions and politics of literacy, * organising and sustaining a literacy programme, and * teaching and learning methodologies and materials. The participants were drawn in almost equal numbers from Third World countries and the U K , and the papers reflect the experience in both parts of the world. This report will therefore be of interest and relevance to all those who work in development, in literacy or in adult education whether in Western societies or in developing countries. It is published by **Education for Development** as a contribution to International Literacy Year 1990.

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